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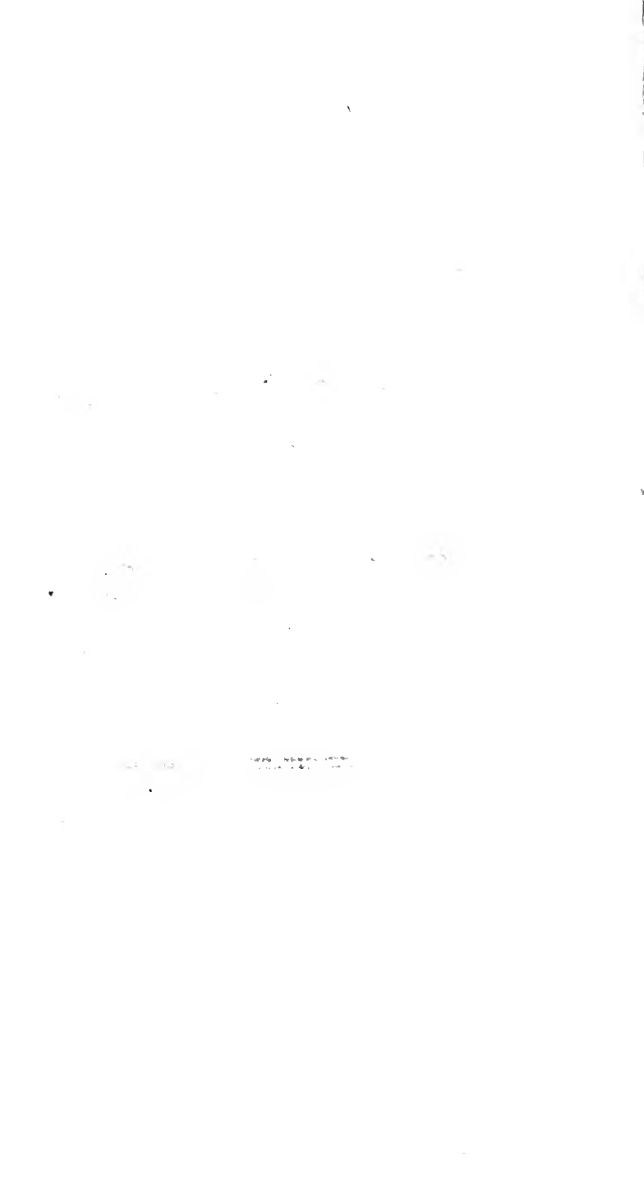




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DÆMONIACS.

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# D Æ M O N I A C S.

AN ENQUIRY INTO THE  
HEATHEN AND THE SCRIPTURE  
D O C T R I N E

O F

# D Æ M O N S.

IN WHICH THE  
HYPOTHESES OF THE REV. MR. FARMER,  
AND OTHERS ON THIS SUBJECT,  
ARE PARTICULARLY CONSIDERED.

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BY J O H N ✓ F E L L.

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*Quid verum—curo & rogo & omnis in hoc sum.* HOR.

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## INTRODUCTION.

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## INTRODUCTION.

**I**T hath been affirmed by several learned writers, that the Dæmoniacs mentioned in the Gospel, were persons labouring only under natural diseases, such as a deep melancholy, madness, or epilepsy, and not at all affected by any evil spirits. This opinion was intimated above an hundred years ago, by Mr. Joseph Mede, and, about forty years since, urged with great vehemence by Dr. Sykes ; when it was as warmly opposed by some other divines. The same hypothesis was afterwards taken up by Dr. Lardner in his Case of the Dæmoniacs of the New Testament ; and is now revived again and enforced by the Reverend Hugh Farmer, in his Essay on the Dæmoniacs of the New Testament ; the design of which work is to shew, “ that the disorders, imputed to supernatural possessions, proceed from natural causes, not from the agency of any evil spirits \*.”

\* Introduction, p. 2.

*Although we entertain not the least doubt concerning the reality of those dæmoniacal possessions asserted in the Gospel; yet the arguments, urged of late in defence of the contrary opinion, have excited our attention and concern more than the opinion itself. It is not merely, therefore, the doctrine in dispute that we judge to be of such dangerous tendency, but the principles on which it is grounded, the reasoning made use of for its support, and the causes assigned for those particular calamities, which are, by the sacred penmen, ascribed to the influence of evil spirits. The subject, as it hath been managed by some of the last writers on dæmoniacs, now becomes interesting, and affects both the nature of morality, and the truth of the Holy Scriptures.*

*As we wish to avoid all misrepresentations of other men's sentiments, we hope that some allowance will be made for frequent and necessary quotations, to make it evident that we do not impute to any author opinions which he never maintained. For want of care in this respect, groundless prejudices are often raised against those who are of a persuasion different from our own. It would frequently save much trouble, prevent many an unjust censure, and throw great light upon the subject in debate, if those who differ in their sentiments,*



*ments, when they write one against another, would but calmly and exactly state the particular articles concerning which they really differ.*

*We trust that nothing will be advanced in the following treatise, which can be justly considered as favouring ridiculous tales and lying wonders, or as encouraging a vain and groundless superstition ; since our business is only with certain facts related in the Scriptures. We shall therefore endeavour, first, to state and examine the hypotheses and arguments that are urged against the plain and obvious sense of holy writ concerning possessions by evil spirits ; and then, consider the principles and reasoning on which the possibility of any such agency, as that supposed in dæmoniacal cases, is absolutely denied.*

*The learned writers, who oppose what is called the vulgar and absurd notion of possessions, maintain, that the more immediate objects of religious worship among the Heathens were dead men, or departed human spirits ; that, the word dæmon is not only used by the Heathens themselves for their deities, but also by the sacred writers for the objects of Pagan worship, which the prophets of God always affirm to be dead men ; that, the apostles, when speaking of possession, use this*  
phrase

## x INTRODUCTION.

*phrase in the same sense, and by dæmons understand nothing more than the souls of deceased persons; and that, since the Holy Scriptures everywhere assure us, that the Heathen deities or dæmons have no power to do either good or harm, much less to work miracles, it follows, that there never was, nor could be, a real dæmoniac in the world\*. Such is the reasoning which is opposed to the common interpretation of those passages, in the Gospel, that relate to possessions by evil spirits. The following examples will sufficiently intimate Mr. Farmer's opinion concerning the Pagan Gods, “ Notwithstanding the magnificent titles by which the Heathens describe “ their supreme deity, yet they do at the same “ time inform us, that he had a father and a “ mother, a grandfather and a grandmother, and “ was of the same kindred with the other gods “ of whom he was chief †.—It farther appears, “ that deified human spirits were (according to “ the Pagan system of theology) associated with “ and represented the natural gods, and that “ both were called by the same names. The “ sun, or æther, or air, or whatever other*

\* Lardner's Case of Dem. Disc. 2d. Farm. Essay on Dem. p. 152—240.

† On Mir. p. 176, 177.

“ part of nature was esteemed the supreme deity  
 “ of the Pagans, was called in Egypt, Osiris;  
 “ in Chaldea and Phenicia, Bel or Baal; and  
 “ in many other countries, Jupiter. Now, it is  
 “ universally known, that Jupiter, Bel and Osiris  
 “ had once been mortal men, who were supposed  
 “ to be advanced after death to a deified state.  
 “ For the same reasons therefore, for which the  
 “ chief Heathen Numen was called Osiris,  
 “ or Bel, or Jupiter, he might be called a  
 “ daemon; supposing the word to denote a  
 “ deified human spirit. It was under this  
 “ last character that he was principally re-  
 “ garded by the common people\*. — That  
 “ the more immediate objects of popular ado-  
 “ ration amongst the Heathens were deified  
 “ human beings, is a fact attested by all an-  
 “ tiquity, whether Pagan, Jewish, or Chris-  
 “ tian†.” On this very principle, our author  
 grounds and supports his Essay on the Demo-  
 niacs of the New Testament. In that treatise  
 he thus states his subject, and introduces  
 his arguments: “ We have elsewhere ‡ ex-  
 “ amined the meaning of demons, when applied  
 “ to the objects of popular worship in the Hea-

\* On Mir. p. 179, 180.

† Ibid. p. 186. ‡ Ibid. ch. iii. sect. 2.

“ then world ; and shewn from the united testi-  
 “ mony of Pagans and Jews ; from the au-  
 “ thors of the Septuagint version of the Old  
 “ Testament, and from the writers of the New,  
 “ that we are hereby to understand such human  
 “ spirits as superstition deified. We are now to  
 “ inquire, whether the word be not used in the  
 “ same sense by all the ancients, when they speak  
 “ upon the subject of POSSESSIONS \*.

*We are now to enquire, in our turn, whether the reverse of all this be not true, and whether the contrary may not be proved from the united testimony both of Pagans and the sacred penmen. It is but just, that the ancient Heathens should speak for themselves ; they are at least, capable of telling the world what their own notions really were, although they might not have been blessed with that justness of sentiment and propriety of manner, which were reserved for happier times. But our author, well aware, that some one might think of a more general appeal to ancient writers, introduces the following exception, “ It is when read-  
 “ ing the philosophers, that it becomes us most  
 “ to be upon our guard, if we would not be led*

\* P. 21.

“ into mistakes concerning the Pagan deities.  
 “ When they began to reason upon the nature of  
 “ the gods, innumerable objections arose in their  
 “ minds against the vulgar system of theology;  
 “ which some of them derided, and others en-  
 “ deavoured to refine and improve. Shocked at the  
 “ absurdity of the worship paid to dead persons,  
 “ they might be willing to persuade themselves  
 “ and others, that their demons were spiritual  
 “ substances of a more noble origin than the human  
 “ race. They undertook to determine, with what  
 “ sort of beings all the different regions of the  
 “ universe were peopled; and some of them filled  
 “ the æther with such demons as had never been  
 “ men. But we have no concern here with the  
 “ speculations of the philosophers, who on this,  
 “ as on other points, contradicted one another, and  
 “ themselves likewise\*.” Unhappy men! who are  
 not only denied a fair hearing, but also disquali-  
 fied from giving in an evidence, even when  
 the credit and honour of their own times and  
 country are at stake, nor allowed to offer one word  
 either in favour of themselves, or of their fellow  
 citizens! Not in this manner did they treat one  
 of the ablest and most faithful champions of the  
 Christian faith: “May we know,” said they, “what

\* On Mir. p. 189, 190.

“ this

“ *this new doctrine is whereof thou speakest ? For  
 “ thou bringest certain strange things to our ears ;  
 “ we would know, therefore, what these things  
 “ mean\*.*” It seems unreasonable, to exclude the  
 writings and opinions of the most learned and judi-  
 cious, from what immediately relates to their  
 own times and to the sentiments of those among  
 whom they lived. How are we to become ac-  
 quainted with the vulgar ideas of former ages,  
 or to understand whence they derived their dif-  
 ferent notions ? The vulgar are not the inventors  
 of those opinions which are commonly received ;  
 nor are they the recorders of their own sentiments  
 and practice. It will perhaps be said, that not  
 philosophers but poets are the men who record  
 the common notions of ancient times with respect  
 to religion ; and that, “ *We have no just rea-  
 “ son to affirm, that the poets invented what they  
 “ say concerning their gods†.*” How far this  
 is just we take not upon us to determine, because  
 it has been affirmed by some very great names,  
 that Fiction and Lying are inseparable from  
 poetry, and that, an artful tale, disguised with  
 various fables, pleases more than truth itself.  
 However, the poets shall be examined on this sub-

\* Aët, xvii. 19, 20.

† On Mir. p. 189.

ject, but in connection with the philosophers, that the truth of the case may be fairly stated; for if they should happen to contradict one another in their ideas of *dæmons*, it must be enquired, to which of their opinions the sacred writers allude; otherwise, we may fall into great errors concerning Scripture phraseology: and if any thing should be found either in the poets or philosophers favourable to this doctrine, "That the immedialte objects of Pagan worship had once been men," it shall be freely granted in aid of that system which represents all *dæmons* as nothing more than departed human spirits. Nor, can we be justly denied the assistance of philosophers on this subject, since, our author himself, notwithstanding all that he hath said, very freely admits their information, whenever he thinks it advantageous to his own cause. We only desire, that they may be allowed to give an impartial evidence.

## E R R A T A.

Page 5, l. 8, for Sanchoniathan, read Sanchoniathon—p. 9, l. 1, *dele* only—p. 36, l. 6, after above," add '—p. 42, l. 6, after *first-fruits* ! for ! place,—p. 46, l. 10, for *carcasses*, read *carcases*—p. 48, l. 24, for understanding, read " understand—p. 69, l. 25, for *sa*, read *as*—p. 70, l. 21, for sacrifice, read sacrificed—p. 72, at the note, for <sup>b</sup> On Dem. read i On Dem.—p. 75, l. 7, before objects, read the—p. 76, l. 24, for distributors, read diistributers; so p. 98, l. 3—p. 78, l. 2, for wherever, read whereever—p. 80, l. last, after " Amen !" add \*—p. 84, l. 8, to existence," add †, and as a note, read † De Iſid. & Oſir.—p. 97, l. 6, for Plutarch's, read Plutarch—p. 108, l. 14, after " Paradise" add †, and as a note, read † Contr. Celf. Lib. VI.—p. 122, l. 26, for Akaziah, read Ahaziah—p. 151, l. 5, for " mention." And, read " mention;" and—p. 156, l. 24, after them \* " *dele* \*—p. 157, l. 8, after writer, *dele* —p. 167, l. 15, for inſeperable, read inſeparable—p. 174, l. 18, after ſeek, read to—p. 207, l. 3, to p. 237, l. 8, for § 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, read 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23—p. 243, to the beginning of Chap. VI. prefix § 1.—p. 289, l. 8, for " Pſal. 48, 49 \*." read " Pſal. lxxviii. 48, 49 \*."—p. 294, l. 2, for propriety, read propriety—p. 312, l. 26, *dele* be—p. 334, l. 6, after jumble, add †, and as a note, read † Prior.—p. 345, l. 13, after *art*, place †, and as a note, read † Dryden's Virgil's Georgics—p. 348, l. 2, after appear, put \*, and as a note, read \* Dryden's Virgil's *Æneid*—p. 379, note, for Dem. viii. read Dem. 8—p. 384, l. 27, for terms, read term—p. 403, at the bottom, for § Pet. ii. 24, read i Pet. ii. 24,



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C H A P. I.

*The Judgment of the Heathens concerning their own  
Gods, examined and fairly stated.*

§. 1. **W**HOEVER is acquainted with the theogonies and ancient histories of their gods, preserved among the Greeks, and with the story of Prometheus, cannot well be ignorant, that the greatest part of those deities to whom the Heathens sacrificed, were by them considered as existing prior to the creation of man. This, indeed, is sufficiently clear from Hesiod's theogony; in the beginning of which he thus addresses the Muses: "Hail, daughters of Jove, celebrate the divine original of the immortals always existing, who were produced from the earth and starry heaven". More-

<sup>a</sup> Theog. ver. 105.

“ over say, how, at first, the gods and the  
 “ earth came into being, and the rivers, and  
 “ boundless sea with his restless tides, and  
 “ the shining stars, and the all-surrounding  
 “ heaven above, together with the gods, givers  
 “ of good things, who sprang from them?” To  
 this the following answer is given: “ Chaos  
 “ first existed, then broad-bosomed earth,  
 “ the fixed seat of all the gods, who frequent  
 “ the top of snowy Olympus. But Love,  
 “ who frees from care both gods and men,  
 “ and controuls the mind, is the best of the  
 “ immortals. From Chaos sprang Erebus  
 “ and dusky Night, and from these came  
 “ Æther and smiling Day. But first the  
 “ earth, without mixing with another, pro-  
 “ duced the starry heaven commensurate to  
 “ herself; moreover she brought forth moun-  
 “ tains and the barren sea. Then joining  
 “ afterwards with heaven, she produced  
 “ Ocean and all the Titans, among whom  
 “ were Hyperion, Thea, and Japetus; lovely  
 “ Tethys, Rhea, and Phœbe, crowned with  
 “ golden light; and after these, crooked  
 “ Time, the last of all and most dreadful of  
 “ her children<sup>b</sup>. From Ocean and Tethys,  
 “ eldest of the Titans, sprang three thousand

<sup>b</sup> Theog. ver. 117 to 138.

“ rivers

“ rivers and as many fountains, the sons and  
 “ daughters of Ocean, whom Tethys bore <sup>e</sup>.  
 “ But Rhea, mixing with Hyperion, brought  
 “ forth the majestic sun, and the bright moon,  
 “ and Aurora, which shines both on gods and  
 “ men <sup>d</sup>. From Rhea, subdued by Time,  
 “ came Vesta, Ceres, and golden footed  
 “ Juno; the mighty Aides, or invisible god,  
 “ who inhabits the infernal mansions, of an  
 “ unrelenting nature, and loud roaring Nep-  
 “ tune, shaker of the Earth, and scheming  
 “ Jove, father of gods and men <sup>e</sup>.” Japetus,  
 joining with Themis, both chief Titans (or  
 according to Hesiod <sup>f</sup> with Clymene, a fountain,  
 one of the daughters of Ocean and Tethys)  
 had the divine Prometheus, who, being  
 assisted by the daughter of Atlas, a Titan,  
 created mortal man. If any one should ask,  
 what authorities had Hesiod to represent the  
 world as raised out of a chaos; or how came  
 he to resemble Moses also in other things, as  
 when he speaks of *Day* and shining *Phœbe*,  
 before the sun and moon were produced;  
 like our own country man, who, following  
 the Scriptures, saith,

<sup>e</sup> Theog. 336 to 370, with their names.

<sup>d</sup> Theog. ver, 371.    <sup>e</sup> Ibid. 553.    <sup>f</sup> Ibid. 507.

— And forthwith light

*Ethereal, first of things, quintessence pure,  
Sprung from the deep; and from her native east,  
To journey through the æry gloom began,  
Sphear'd in a radiant cloud: for yet the Sun  
Was not; she in a cloudy tabernacle  
Sojourn'd the while<sup>c</sup>?*

We answer, that to determine such matters belongs not to our present subject. “There is no reason to affirm” (as we are assured by Mr. Farmer<sup>f</sup>;) “that the poets invented what they say concerning their gods.” This is enough for us. Not that we mean to assert, with that gentleman, when speaking of their theogonies, “that their works are either faithful records of ancient traditions, or accurate representations of life and manners<sup>g</sup>,” because some perhaps will insist upon it, that Hesiod’s Poem really answers the character which the Muses give of themselves, in the beginning of it, where they say to him: “Shepherd, we know how to relate many false tales, resembling those things which were originally true; and, when we please, we know how to explain the truth itself.” But the discussion of such things must be left to those who are of a more lively imagination

<sup>c</sup> Milton’s Par. Lost, B. VIII. v. 243—249.

<sup>f</sup> Dissert. on Mir. p. 189

<sup>g</sup> Ibid.

§. 2. It cannot but appear evident to an unbiaſſed reader, that Heſiod profeſſedly deſcribes both the origin of the world, and of thoſe gods by which it was thought to be governed in his time. His theogony contains the ſame plan with that aſcribed to Orpheus, and the firſt poets; and which alſo in ſtill earlier times had been embraced by Sancho-niathan, the Phenician. They all attempt to explain things of no leſs moment than the original of their gods, the creation of the world, and the formation of man. Our poet aſſigns to all his deities a beginning, Eros, or Love, excepted, whom he introduces as the firſt agent, but ſays nothing of his commencement; while at the ſame time he affirms him to be the moſt excellent of the gods. Now theſe very ſame traditions were received and followed by the moſt learned of the Greek philoſophers, not even Plato excepted. Parmenides, with many others, repreſents Love as the eldeſt of the gods, and as the firſt cauſe of all things. The ancient Greeks acknowledged one ſupreme deity, the Creator of the univerſe, whom they conſidered as incapable of any evil, and to whom they aſcribed every perfection, while at the ſame time, they worſhipped a multitude of other gods as intelligent beings, ſuperior to the nature of human ſouls; and thought theſe deities to have been

brought into being by the first cause, along with the different parts of nature, prior to the existence of man. This is evident from those passages in Hesiod's theogony, which we have just quoted. The Supreme God is frequently described in their writings by such names and epithets as sufficiently distinguish him from every created nature. Thus when he is called *the first cause, the first mind, the uncreated, self-subsisting God*<sup>h</sup>.

§. 3. But before we proceed any further, it will be necessary to take some notice of the following passage; not more remarkable for the reasoning which it contains, than for the representation which it gives of some very ancient nations. Mr. Farmer, after asserting it as a fact attested by all antiquity, that the more immediate objects of popular adoration among the Heathens, were deified human spirits, introduces a quotation from Herodotus as his first proof, and subjoins such an inference as suited his own purpose. He thus expresses the whole: "Herodotus, when speaking of the Persians, says, *they have neither statues, nor temples, nor altars. What I take to be their reason, is, that they do not believe, like the Greeks, that the gods are of the*

<sup>h</sup> See many instances in Cud. Intel, Syst. p. 404.

" race

“ *race of men*. Now, in as much as the Greeks  
 “ derived their religion from the Phenicians  
 “ and Egyptians, and spread it amongst the  
 “ Romans, there can be no doubt, but that  
 “ the gods of all these people were of human  
 “ race<sup>1</sup>.” As this passage will be reviewed  
 again, we shall only observe for the present,  
 that our author carefully omits the account  
 which Herodotus hath given concerning the  
 Persian objects of worship, because that is a  
 flat contradiction to his repeated assertions.  
 The historian also is misunderstood, when he  
 is represented as saying, that the Greeks be-  
 lieved their gods to be of *the race* of men; for  
 Herodotus intended no such thing, as shall be  
 shewn afterwards. And, notwithstanding it is  
 here affirmed as a matter of certainty, that  
 the gods of the Phenicians and Egyptians were  
 of the human race; yet we shall now prove,  
 even from the testimony of Herodotus himself,  
 not only that the objects of religious worship  
 among the eastern nations, were such gods as  
 had never been men, but also that divine ho-  
 nours were not paid to deceased heroes in those  
 countries. The Persians worshipped the whole  
 circle of Heaven, which they called Jupiter:  
 they sacrificed to the sun and moon, to the  
 earth and fire, and to the water and winds:

<sup>1</sup> On Mir. p. 186, 187.

these were originally their only gods; but afterwards they added to the number Alitta, the Assyrian Astarte or queen of heaven, called in their own language Mitra <sup>k</sup>. The Arabians acknowledged no gods besides the sun and moon, whom they called Ourotalt and Alilat <sup>l</sup>. The only gods, in the manner of whose worship the Egyptians all agreed, were Isis and Osiris, the sun and moon. They paid no religious honours to heroes: they would not allow that a man could be begotten by a god, nor that the gods were conversant with men <sup>m</sup>. The inhabitants of Meroe in Æthiopia worshipped no other gods than Jupiter and Bacchus, that is, the heavens and the sun <sup>n</sup>. The gods, to which the Scythians paid divine honours, were only Vesta, Jupiter, whom they called Papæus, and the earth, Apia, whom they considered as his wife, and the sun and moon, named Oetofyrus and Artimpasa, and the powers of war, called by Herodotus, Hercules and Mars, names which were never heard of among the ancient Scythians; the Vesta of the historian is Tabiti, in their language <sup>o</sup>. The Massagetes, their neighbours, and who resembled them in their habit and manner of living, adored no gods but

<sup>k</sup> Herod. Clio.      <sup>l</sup> Thalia.      <sup>m</sup> Euterp.

<sup>n</sup> Ibid.      <sup>o</sup> Melp.



the sun only, to whom they sacrificed horses, the swiftest of animals to the swiftest of all the gods <sup>†</sup>. The Getes esteemed the heavens to be the only deity <sup>‡</sup>. The same objects of religious worship passed from the ancient Scythians to the Goths and barbarous Germans, our own ancestors, of whom Cæsar thus speaks: “ They account those only in  
 “ the number of the gods whom they see,  
 “ and by whose influence they are evidently  
 “ assisted, the sun, fire, and the moon;  
 “ of the rest they have not heard any thing  
 “ even by report <sup>†</sup>.” The testimony of Plato also on this occasion, is of too much importance to be omitted. “ The first inhabitants  
 “ of Greece,” says he, “ thought the sun  
 “ and moon, stars and heaven, to be *the only*  
 “ *gods, as do most of the Barbarians at this*  
 “ *time* <sup>‡</sup>.” Here we have a fair confession, that the hero-gods, the latter deities of Greece, were either rejected or not known, even in the days of Plato, by the greatest part of the world: this, compared with the foregoing testimonies, clearly shews, that the superstitious objects of idolatrous worship were originally the same in all countries; the sun and moon, the heaven and stars, and the earth

<sup>†</sup> Clio.

<sup>‡</sup> Ibid.

<sup>†</sup> De bell. Gal. lib. vi.

<sup>‡</sup> In Cratyl.

and fire, with water and winds. These were the *Cabiri*, or mighty gods of the eastern nations; the *Consentes*, or co-operating gods of the Romans; called also *dii penates*, by whom, according to their theology, men live, and move, and have their being. In the Scriptures they are styled *the hosts of heaven*; by the poets they are called *the givers of good things*; and are thus named by Xenophon, *the other gods who give to us good things*, and that too in distinction from him, “who formed and sustains “the world’.” Mr. Farmer, therefore, to say the least of it, speaks rashly, when he so often affirms, with respect to the Heathens in general, that the more immediate objects of their worship were deified men, but more especially, when he asserts it as a fact, attested by all antiquity, whether Pagan, Jewish, or Christian; for this hath nothing to support it, as is well known, but mere affirmation.

§. 4. But we are told, “that deified human “spirits were (according to the Pagan system “of theology) associated with, and represented the natural gods, and that both were “called by the same names.” But where is

<sup>c</sup> Mem. lib. 4, cap. 3.

<sup>d</sup> Far. Mir. p. 179.

the proof of all this ? Such a supposition may be necessary for a modern hypothesis, but hath it any foundation in fact ? Yes, surely ! “ For Diodorus Siculus says, that some of “ the earthly gods had the same names with “ the celestial <sup>v</sup>.” That may be ; but were they always *worshipped together* ? were their *altars* and *rites* the same ? and did the earthly gods *represent* the celestial deities of the same name ? This is the fact to be proved. It is said : “ Plutarch informs us that each demon “ was called by the name of that celestial god “ from whom he received his power and honour <sup>v</sup>.” Supposing Plutarch to have expressed himself in this manner, what does the evidence amount to ? Hath he said that these ministering demons were the *souls of deceased men* ? that they *represented* the Deities from whom they received their power ; and that for *this reason* they were called by the same name ? Has he told us, that in consulting oracles, the *same sacrifices* were as much offered to the demon as to the god ; or that these natural gods themselves *were never* called demons, *independent* of their ministering spirits ? Now he affirms none of these things ; the passage therefore, is not at all to the purpose.

<sup>v</sup> Far. Mir. p. 179, note <sup>t</sup>.    <sup>w</sup> Ibid. p. 175, note <sup>1</sup>.

But it may be said, that although this or any other particular passage, should not be thought applicable to the present case; yet it doth not therefore follow, that deified human spirits were *not*, according to the *Pagan system* of theology, associated with the natural gods. Very true. But what is meant by the *Pagan system*: The system of theology among the idolatrous Greeks; or, a system that is supposed to contain the theology of all the Heathen nations? It does not appear that even the Grecians, who deified human spirits, ever connected the soul of any hero with the worship of their natural gods. And indeed we have at hand, a striking evidence of their general practice in this respect: Herodotus, on finding that the Egyptians placed a Hercules among their ancient gods, and that this Hercules was very different from the son of Amphitryon in Greece, and a deity of great antiquity, immediately adds, “and, therefore, in my opinion, those Grecians act most rationally, who build temples to both; sacrificing to the first as to an immortal god, under the name of Olympian, and paying religious honours to the latter as an hero\*.” We have here an instance

\* Euterp.

full to our purpose : Two gods of the same name, the one a natural and immortal deity, styled Olympian, the other an hero-god, acknowledged to have been once a mortal man ; each having separate temples and distinct worship, agreeable to the supposed difference of their natures and characters ; and this spoken of with approbation, as the general practice in all such cases ; while those who did otherwise, are represented as acting through ignorance, not knowing that the name in Egypt was used for a god of a different nature from that in Greece ; and therefore the historian proceeds to a more full enumeration of Grecian errors, concerning the Egyptian Hercules.

A more decisive proof cannot well be imagined, than this is, that the ancient Greeks were not accustomed to associate deified human spirits with their natural gods, in religious worship ; and that they did not consider their primary Deities as represented by the heroes of the same name. But if the phrase, *Pagan system*, is to be understood as including the theology of all the Heathen nations, then it will appear with still greater evidence, that nothing can be more groundless than this supposition, “ That deified human spirits  
“ were associated with the natural gods in reli-  
“ gious

“gious worship;” for the eastern nations, as we have seen, whether polished or barbarous, paid no religious honours to deceased men. Nay even the Egyptians, who first enlarged the eastern idolatry, and were considered as the inventors of that doctrine which relates to transactions with the gods, by the mediation of others, yet refused religious worship to all heroes. The Grecian idolatry was scarcely known in the east, and affected but a very small part of the world, till after the overthrow of the Persian empire; nor was it admitted among the Romans, for above an hundred and seventy years after Romulus. The reason why it was offensive to other nations, we shall presently see.

But it is still urged, “that the ancient nations gave the names of their kings to the elements of the world, which were their natural deities, whom alone they acknowledged to be strictly and properly gods.” What are we to infer from this passage: That the ancient nations never consider their heroes as gods; and that those deities, whom they acknowledged to be strictly and properly gods, had never been men? By no means! What other inference can be fairly drawn from it with pro-

7 Farm. On Mir. p. 179, note 1.

priety? A very different one surely. Do not the words clearly intimate the following conclusion; that since the ancient nations gave the names of their kings to the elements of the world, they were ever afterwards worshipped together? We can discover no foundation for any such inference; and besides, we have seen that the contrary is true; and it hath been shewn from the confession of the Greeks themselves, that the eastern nations, in the height of their power, did not worship hero-gods. However, as the names of different deities and men have been blended together, and by this means occasioned errors, and sometimes favoured misrepresentations, we shall endeavour to give a clear and satisfactory view of this matter.

§ 5. There were many different gods of the same name, whose rites were different. As for instance, the Supreme Deity is sometimes mentioned under the term Hammon; Jupiter, the head of the created gods, was very often worshipped under the title of Hammon; and divine honours were frequently paid to the sun also, under the name of Hammon; yet the Heathens neither consider the sun as the supreme deity, nor as the head of their created gods. There  
were

were also many different names of the same god, and different rites belonging to each name, while at the same time, but one deity was worshipped under those several names. The sun was frequently honoured as Hammon, sometimes as Horus, and also as Apollo, and at other times as Beelsamen and Bacchus ; the moon as Diana, Lucina, Hecate, and Astarte ; and the earth as Vesta, Rhea, Cybele, and Ops. The same names, which were given to the chief of the created gods, were often applied to the supreme deity ; but this was always done in such a manner as to shew clearly, that the first cause was meant, and not a created power ; as when he is expressly styled Jupiter the origin of all things, the source of nature, unbegotten, and self-existing.

The very same epithets of power and dominion which belong to the first cause of all, were sometimes applied also to Jupiter, the chief of the created gods ; but then it was always clearly shewn, that he only was meant, who is the son of Saturn, and not the maker of the universe. Thus, Horace, <sup>2</sup> “ We know  
“ that he took off the impious Titans with  
“ swift lightning, who rules alone over the

<sup>2</sup> Hor. Lib. III. Od. iv. v. 42, &c.



“ earth and sea, and infernal kingdoms—  
 “ that horrid troop, relying on their own  
 “ strength, had struck terror into Jove.”

Now, to assert that in the former of these examples he is called *the source of nature*, who had once been a man, and that in the latter, he is represented as being filled with terror, whom the Heathens considered as the creator of the universe, must be an evident proof, either of very great inattention to the language and design of ancient writers, or else of that kind of prejudice which admits of no cure.

Ovid very carefully distinguishes between the maker of all things, and Jupiter the son of Saturn, whom yet he describes as chief of the created gods, and governor of the world; but he never styles him, *Ille opifex rerum—mundi fabricator*, nor assigns to him any power, till the different parts of the world were settled, and the several orders of beings adjusted; then, he represents him as the head of created deities, and puts the world under their government. And while he is describing an assembly of the gods, concerning the wickedness and destruction of mankind, he seizes an opportunity of complimenting the Emperor, and compares his dignity to the pre-eminence of Jove. Horace also in the foregoing passage, but with

C

greater

greater elegance, intimates a comparison between Jupiter, who, through wisdom and prudence, defeated the Titans, and Augustus, who, by his superior conduct, had become victorious over all his enemies. But neither Horace nor Ovid ever meant to compare Augustus with the supreme deity and creator of the universe : such a thought destroys the allusion : their language is confined to him, whom the law of their own twelve tables represents only as the president of the eternal *dæmons*, or of the *dii consentes* ; and their compliment to the Emperor implies no more than this, that as Jupiter was appointed by the creator of the world to preside over the other gods, so Augustus was appointed by Jupiter and the gods, to preside over all the princes of the earth : and that as Jove, so also the Emperor, obtained this honour from superior wisdom and justice.

We should not have been so minute on this article, had not the very learned Dr. Leland <sup>a</sup> considered the above-mentioned passage in Horace, as a description of the supreme deity of the Heathens. Whatever comes from the pen of so great a man, carries

<sup>a</sup> The Advantage, &c. of the Christian Revelation, 8vo. vol. i. p. 114.

with it an idea of respectable authority, we must not, therefore, even venture to deviate, without making at least an apology.

§ 6. The names given to the first objects of idolatrous worship were such as denoted power, influence, and the exercise of rule and government. And it has been thought by some very learned men <sup>b</sup>, that this circumstance, as well as the worship of the heavenly bodies, arose at first from a corruption of those divine traditions, which were carefully preserved among the patriarchs, concerning the creation of the world; agreeably with which Moses thus expresseth himself, “ And God  
 “ made two great lights ; the greater light to  
 “ rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the  
 “ night: he made the stars also. And God  
 “ set them in the firmament of the heaven,  
 “ to give light upon the earth, and to rule  
 “ over the day, and over the night, and to  
 “ divide the light from the darkness.”  
 From certain traditions of this kind, it hath been supposed that the first idolaters imagined that a *real dominion and authority* over the day and night was, by the creator of the world, originally committed to the sun and moon, as in-

<sup>b</sup> Owen Theologoum. lib. iii. cap. 5.

<sup>c</sup> Gen. chap. i.

telligent beings ; and that hence they were soon considered as rulers of the world. Be that as it may. Ancient idolaters did undoubtedly attribute authority and rule to the sun, moon, and other parts of nature ; and therefore honoured them with such names and titles as were expressive of their supposed dignity and influence, in producing those things which are necessary for the support of life. Now it was very common in ancient times, and particularly among the eastern nations, to join the names of their respective gods with those of their princes ; as Asdrubal, Hannibal, Adrammelech : hence it came to pass, that some of the first Heroes bore the very same names which belonged originally to the natural or primary gods. But we are not hence to infer, that for this reason they were also objects of religious worship ; or that such of them as were raised by their superstitious votaries to divine honours, were associated with the natural gods, and considered as their representatives. By no means. We have seen that Hercules the Hero was carefully distinguished from Hercules the Olympian God, and never worshipped as his representative. A Tuscan prince, in the days of Tarquin, was called *Lar* Porfenna ;

Porfenna \*; but it does not follow from this circumstance, that he is to be looked on as one of the Lares, or household gods of the Romans, or that he was supposed to become, after death, one of those spirits which drive men into madness.

The same custom of giving divine names to their children, prevailed even among the Hebrews themselves; as may be seen almost in every book of the Old Testament. Now shall we conclude, that the supreme deity, or that the more immediate objects of religious worship in ancient times, were originally men, because several kings and princes had been called by the same names? Such an inference is too ridiculous even for supposition itself. And yet it doth not appear how the following passage can be considered in any other light: “The sun, or  
“æther, or air, or whatever other part of nature was esteemed the supreme deity of the  
“Pagans, was called in Egypt, Osiris; in  
“Chaldea and Phenicia, Bel or Baal; and in  
“many other countries, Jupiter. Now it is  
“universally known, that Jupiter, Bel, and  
“Osiris, had once been mortal men, who were  
“supposed to be advanced after death to a

\* Plutar. Poplicol.

“ deified state. For the same reason, there-  
 “ fore, for which the chief Heathen Numen  
 “ was called Osiris, or Bel, or Jupiter, he  
 “ might be called a demon, supposing the  
 “ word to denote a deified human spirit \*.”  
 But it is universally known, that no part of  
 nature was ever considered by the Heathens  
 as their supreme deity; that the Egyptians,  
 under the names of Osiris and Isis, worshipped  
 the sun and moon, and never paid any reli-  
 gious honours to Hero-gods; and that under  
 the name *Bel*, the Chaldeans also worshipped  
 what had never been a man, as did the Greeks  
 under the term Jupiter.

But omitting these things, which of the  
 following shall we assert as most probable?  
 That the primary gods of the Heathens, ru-  
 ling, as they thought, in the elements, were  
 without names, till men honoured them with  
 the titles of their deceased kings? Or, that  
 the names of different gods were given to  
 princes and their children? Or shall we rather  
 affirm, that the world never thought of wor-  
 shipping either the supreme deity, or the pri-  
 mary gods, till they began to pay religious  
 honours to the souls of deceased men, under  
 those exalted ideas? And that the true God

\* Farm. on Mir. p. 179, 180.

was never heard of under the character of *Lord*, and *Righteous King*, before the days of Belus, king of Assyria, and Melchizedek, king of Salem? We might as well assert, that Jehovah was never considered either under the idea of a living god, or father, till the death of Abijah, the son of Jeroboam; and that the God of Israel was ever afterwards joined in divine worship with that prince, because his name signifies *Jehovah, my Father!*

Berosus, a Chaldean by birth, and Priest of Belus, represents the sense of the ancient Chaldeans concerning the origin of things, in the following manner: “That there was a time when all was darkness and water; but that Belus, who by interpretation is Jupiter, cutting the darkness in the middle, separated the earth and heaven from one another, and so framed the world; and that this Belus also formed the Stars and the Sun<sup>f</sup>.” Now can any one imagine that Berosus, by Belus, in this passage, meant a certain man who reigned in Chaldea? Or that he who created the heaven and the earth, received his name from some petty prince in the time of Abraham? Surely not. In what light, then, must we consider the foregoing passage; wherein we

<sup>f</sup> See Cud. Book I. chap. iv. p. 312.

are told, “ that whatever part of nature was  
 “ esteemed the supreme deity of the Pagans,  
 “ was in Chaldea called Bel ; and that Bel  
 “ was universally known to have been a mor-  
 “ tal man ; he might therefore be called a  
 “ dæmon, supposing that word to denote a  
 “ human spirit ? ” Can we look upon this,  
 to say the least of it, otherwise than as a very  
 unfair abuse of words ? By such kind of rea-  
 soning, we might soon prove the god of the  
 Jews to have been a man, and that their  
 princes were *really thought* to be gods : For the  
 word *El*, by which the true and ever blessed  
 Deity is so often named, is applied to angels,  
 princes, rulers, and judges. But after all,  
 it is not in this gentleman’s power to prove,  
 that religious honours were ever paid to any  
 deceased man, under the names of Bel or  
 Osiris ; nor can he bring any decisive evidence  
 to shew that such worship was ever paid to a  
 human spirit, under the term Jupiter. And  
 could the contrary be shewn to be true, yet it  
 would not at all affect the subject in dispute,  
 since the Heathen nations worshipped many  
 gods that had never been men.

§. 7. The Grecian and Roman writers in  
 general, when they speak of the formation of  
 man, do not represent him as created in the  
 image



image of the supreme deity, but in the likeness of the gods who rule the different parts of nature. Hence that of Ovid: “ which  
 “ the son of Iapetus formed into a likeness  
 “ of the gods who rule the world <sup>g</sup>;” and that curious workmanship of Vulcan, mentioned in Hesiod, which he moulded into a beautiful form resembling the immortal goddesses, divine virgins <sup>h</sup>. Such was the common creed both of Greece and Rome, with respect to the origin of mankind. And concerning it, a very eminent Heathen makes the following remark: “ I do not understand why Epicurus should rather choose  
 “ to say, that the gods are like men, than  
 “ that men resemble the gods. It may perhaps be asked, where is the difference? for  
 “ if we be like them, then are they like us.  
 “ I grant it: but thus much I affirm, that  
 “ the similitude was not derived from men  
 “ to the gods, since the gods always existed,  
 “ and were never born after the manner of  
 “ men. The immortal gods therefore, were  
 “ in that form which we resemble, before  
 “ men were honoured with it: for this reason  
 “ their form ought not to be mentioned  
 “ as human, but ours should be spoken of

<sup>g</sup> Meta. lib. i.

<sup>h</sup> Oper. & Dier. ver. 60.

“ as

“ as divine <sup>1</sup>.” It is indeed as evident and plain, as any thing of ancient times can be, that the Heathens did believe those beings which they worshipped as immortal gods, and rulers of the world, to have existed before the creation of man. Nor did the Greeks suppose that gods and goddesses arose from the different sexes of human nature, but that the human kind was formed according to their likeness. How far this opinion contributed to the worship of deceased heroes among that people, and what influence it had in their figurative descriptions concerning the origin of their gods, and the world, and in the fables of the poets, with respect to the manner of their existence, are not objects of our enquiry; since it is not our present business to trace the origin and progress of any species of idolatry, but to state it as it was. Thus much is certain, that this peculiar notion of theirs was the foundation of what is called Hellenism, or the Grecian idolatry, as distinguished from the more extensive and ancient superstition of other Heathens.

The Egyptians first erected altars and statues to the gods, and carved symbolic figures, in which they were followed by seve-

<sup>1</sup> Cicer. de Nat. Deor. lib. i. § 32.

ral of their neighbours; while many others censured their practice in this respect. Yet they, as well as all the rest of the Heathen nations, had a rooted prejudice against this singular opinion of the Greeks. The Egyptians would not allow, that the ornamented images which they set up, bore any resemblance to the real form of their gods<sup>k</sup>; nor, that any god had ever put on the form of a man. So great was the Persian zeal against the use of such things in religious worship, that Cambyfes spared not the idols even of Egypt, but commanded the images of the Cabirian gods themselves to be thrown into the fire<sup>l</sup>, although they were symbolic of his own deities; nor did his successors, for the same reason, shew the least respect to the superstition of Greece. “The Persians neither made  
 “images, nor built temples, charging those  
 “with<sup>o</sup> great folly who practice such things;  
 “for this reason,” says Herodotus, “as I  
 “suppose, because they did not believe the  
 “gods to have a nature resembling that of  
 “man, as the Greeks do<sup>m</sup>.” Herodotus did not mean to say, that the Greeks looked upon all their gods to have been of the human race, as Mr. Farmer would make

<sup>k</sup> Herod. Euterp. <sup>l</sup> Idem. Thalia. <sup>m</sup> Id. Clio.

us believe <sup>a</sup>, contrary to their own testimony; the word which the historian uses, intimates no such thing, but only that they had *man's nature* <sup>o</sup>: For the Greeks believed the gods in their form to resemble men, and the goddesses women; and they considered the form of the gods in this particular, to have been the original pattern according to which human nature was made. And indeed this very idea runs through Homer's poems, and is the ground work of his machinery, with respect to the gods. Nor was this notion confined to the Grecian poets, it met with a favourable reception among the philosophers, and from the Greeks, with other things, was received by the Romans. But the Persians looked upon such an opinion as truly ridiculous. The Scythians were of the same mind, as also their descendants, the old Germans, of whom Tacitus thus speaks: " They think it  
 " a practice unworthy the majesty of the gods,  
 " to enclose them within walls, or to repre-  
 " sent them with a likeness to the human  
 " countenance: they consecrate groves and  
 " forests, and call them by the names of the  
 " gods; whose secret abode they approach  
 " with reverence only <sup>p</sup>." The religious

<sup>a</sup> See § 3, of this chap.

<sup>o</sup> ἀνθρωποφύεας.

<sup>p</sup> De Mor. Germ.

practice of the old Italians was the same, before it was corrupted by the more depraved system of the Greeks. “ Numa forbade the  
 “ Romans to represent god in the form of  
 “ man, or other creature: they indeed built  
 “ temples, but for the first hundred and  
 “ seventy years made no image, because they  
 “ thought it great impiety to represent  
 “ the most excellent beings, by things so  
 “ base and unworthy, and supposed that  
 “ it was by the understanding only men  
 “ could form any conception of the divi-  
 “ nity <sup>9</sup>.”

Many other testimonies to the same purpose might be produced, were it needful: Enough hath been said to shew, that the more immediate objects of Pagan worship were not the souls of deceased men; that even the practice of the Egyptians, in erecting ornamented statues to their gods, was never generally received; and that the custom of the Greeks, in paying religious honours to departed heroes, was despised by all the great nations among the Heathens, the Romans excepted.

§ 8. Mr. Farmer takes up such an idea of the Grecian idolatry as suits his own purpose,

<sup>9</sup> Plutar. Num.

and then without scruple sets it before us as an authentic pattern of the superstitious worship of all other nations in the world. This is undoubtedly a short way of stating the subject, but upon trial it will be found neither a just nor decisive one. And besides, were we to allow the Grecian idolatry to have been a standard for other nations, yet, when fairly examined, it would not answer the end which he hath in view ; because it evidently appears from the Greeks themselves, that no opinion can be more erroneous than this, “ That all the Pagan deities had once been men.” Every one of those arguments therefore, which have been urged on this principle against dæmoniacal possessions, must utterly fail in their application, because grounded on a supposition which is contrary to facts ; as is clearly shewn from the united testimony of the most ancient Greek writers.

We cannot tell what apology to make for our author, while he asserts, times without number, that the more immediate objects of established worship among the ancient nations, *particularly among the Egyptians*, Greeks, and Romans, were dead men ; \* even after himself

\* On Mir. p. 183.

had confessed, that “ Sanchoniathon represents  
 “ the most ancient nations, particularly the  
 “ Phenicians and Egyptians, as acknowledg-  
 “ ing only the natural gods, the sun, moon,  
 “ planets, and elements.” How could he  
 first record such a testimony as this, and then  
 a few pages afterwards advance the follow-  
 ing contradiction: “ Now, inasmuch as the  
 “ Greeks derived their religion from the Phe-  
 “ nicians and Egyptians, and spread it  
 “ amongst the Romans, there can be no  
 “ doubt but that the gods of all these people  
 “ were of the human race!” Now there  
 can be no doubt but that the Greeks them-  
 selves have declared, that neither the Egyp-  
 tians nor the Phenicians, nor many other  
 eastern nations, ever worshipped such gods  
 as had been men: And with any one who can  
 repeat such assertions as the above, notwith-  
 standing the authorities acknowledged by him-  
 self, it is in vain to reason.

§ 9. We cannot close this chapter, without  
 observing what an affecting picture ancient  
 idolatry gives us of the depravity of man-  
 kind. They liked not to retain god in their  
 thoughts, and therefore could not be easy till

<sup>a</sup> On Mir. p. 173.

<sup>t</sup> Ibid: p. 187.

some excuse was found out for ascribing to the creatures those honours which are due to the creator only. Soon after the flood, men began to think it tedious and disagreeable to approach their maker, to supplicate his mercy, and to acknowledge his goodness, although they could easily pay religious worship to the sun and moon, and with tokens of reverence, confess their fancied dominion in the heavens, and salutary influence on the earth. Nay, so vain did they become in their imaginations, that while the worship of the true God was offensive, they could yet bow down before the works of their own hands; and at length the Greeks and Romans not only deified human spirits, but even ranked in the number of their gods base strumpets, and the meanest of knaves; and all the Heathens in every period of their superstition put a religious sanction upon the vilest practices.

Idolatry, indeed, is in its very nature the nurse of vice; because it cannot exist without a denial of the strongest moral obligations. Nothing can be more repugnant to reason, and the first principles of natural religion. That which setteth aside our most solemn duties towards God, must in its consequences be pernicious to the interests of mankind;



the religious worship therefore of any creature is the height of wickedness. Hence the extensive influence of this crime, which was a continued opposition to the light and dictates of nature, clearly proves all idolaters to have been void of true morality and religion. For if genuine virtue doth not include a resolute and steady observance of those sacred duties which we owe to our maker, it is an empty name, and not worth cultivating: if, indeed, we also understand by it those highest moral obligations which are due to God, then genuine virtue never can be found but in the exercise of pure religion, undefiled with idolatrous practices. To talk therefore of virtuous Heathens, if idolaters be meant, is an absurdity too great for language to express !

## C H A P. II.

*The Testimony of Scripture concerning Heathen Gods.*

**W**E shall now proceed to enquire what, according to the sacred penmen, were the objects of religious worship among the Heathens ; by what names they are described in the word of God ; and what is the real opinion of the inspired writers themselves, concerning the natures and characters of the Pagan deities ?

§ 1. The state of idolatry in the time of Moses, is thus described, not in obscure terms :  
 “ Take ye therefore good heed unto your-  
 “ selves, since ye saw no similitude when the  
 “ Lord spake unto you from the fire, lest ye  
 “ corrupt yourselves, and make you a graven  
 “ image, the similitude of any figure, the  
 “ likeness of male or female ; the likeness  
 “ of any beast that is on the earth ; the like-  
 “ ness of any winged fowl that flieth in the  
 “ air ; the likeness of any thing that creepeth  
 “ on the ground ; the likeness of any fish  
 7 that

“ that is in the waters beneath the earth : and  
 “ lest thou lift up thine eyes unto heaven, and  
 “ when thou seest the sun, and the moon, and  
 “ the stars, even all the hosts of heaven,  
 “ shouldest be driven to worship them, and  
 “ serve them, which the Lord thy God hath  
 “ imparted to all nations under the whole  
 “ heaven. <sup>a</sup>” And again, “ If there be found  
 “ among you within any of thy gates which  
 “ the Lord thy God giveth thee, man or wo-  
 “ man that hath wrought wickedness in the  
 “ sight of the Lord thy God, in transgressing  
 “ his covenant ; and hath gone and served  
 “ other gods, and worshipped them, either the  
 “ sun, or moon, or any of the hosts of heaven,  
 “ which I have not commanded <sup>b</sup>.” Moses;  
 in these minute descriptions of the idolatry  
 of his own times, maketh no mention of the  
 souls of dead men, as objects of religious  
 worship ; nor doth he even intimate that any  
 of their emblematic figures were in the shape  
 of men, although he carefully enumerateth  
 the several kinds, according to the similitude  
 of which their images were made.

But the most ancient picture of the  
 first idolatry is in the book of Job : “ If,”  
 saith this patriarch, “ I beheld the sun when

<sup>a</sup> Deut. chap. iv. 15—19.

<sup>b</sup> Ibid. xvii. 23.

“ he shined, or the moon increasing in her  
 “ brightness, and my heart were then secretly  
 “ enticed, or my hand touched my lips, this  
 “ would have been a crime to be punished by  
 “ the judge” of the world, “ because I should  
 “ have lied against the God above. ” This  
 description carries with it evident marks of  
 greater antiquity than even that of Moses.  
 The worship of which Job here speaketh  
 was paid immediately to the sun and moon  
 themselves, the eyes being fixed upon those  
 heavenly bodies in the act of adoration. He  
 maketh no mention of emblematic shrines  
 or figures, which were consecrated to the sun,  
 and moon, and hosts of heaven. If such  
 things had reached the knowledge of Job,  
 he would scarcely have omitted them in this  
 defence of his own conduct; because many  
 have bowed before these emblematic figures,  
 who perhaps never kissed the hand imme-  
 diately to the sun itself. It seemeth therefore,  
 that such things were not used, or at least  
 not much known, in the days of Job; but  
 they are carefully enumerated in the account  
 of Moses, and connected with the worship  
 of the sun, moon, and stars, even all the  
 hosts of heaven: for this reason he forbids

<sup>c</sup> Job. xxxi. 26, &c.

the Israelites to make the likeness of any beast, fowl, reptile, or fish, as an object of devotion.

§ 2. Symbolical representations of the gods had undoubtedly their first rise among the Egyptians; a circumstance often alluded to, both by ancient historians <sup>d</sup> and poets <sup>e</sup>. The time of their commencement seems to have been during the residence of Jacob's descendants among that people. Moses saith of the Israelites, they shall no more offer their sacrifices to *Sborim* <sup>f</sup>, emblematic figures in the likeness of goats, or other rough animals; which plainly intimates that they had done this before: but we never read of any such thing prior to their descent into Egypt; nor does it appear that this kind of idolatry was either known to the Canaanites, while any of the patriarchs lived among them, or practised by the more eastern nations, even in the days of Joshuah. These *Sborim*, as also the *Chamenim* <sup>g</sup>, figurative images of the sun and æther, or else fire-hearths, with other things of the

<sup>d</sup> Herod. Euterp. See the foregoing chap. § 7.

<sup>e</sup> Ovid. Meta. lib. v. ver. 323.

<sup>f</sup> Levit. xvii. 7.

<sup>g</sup> Ibid. xxvi. 30.

like kind, seem to have been the “new gods” whom Moses speaketh of \* “as lately come up,” and “whom” he says “their fathers feared not;” although “their fathers served alien gods on the “other side of the flood †,” in Ur of the Chaldees. But these symbolic figures of the heavenly bodies and their various influence, were not known in those more ancient times; nor are they ever mentioned in the scriptures, till spoken of as a part of the Egyptian idolatry. “The images,” or *teraphim*, which “Rachel stole” from her father ‡, and which afterwards perished “under the oak near Shechem,” where they were “hidden by Jacob” for that end <sup>h</sup>, were not emblematic figures of any created deity. They were used, as appeareth from the history of after-times, for the purpose of divination; and that too, though unlawfully, by some worshippers of the true God. They are carefully distinguished both from graven and molten images.

§ 3. Moses never giveth us one instance of offering sacrifices to departed souls of our own kind. There is indeed only one passage alledged in favour of such an idea; but it can answer no other purpose, be-

\* Deut. xxxii. 17.

† Gen. xxxv. 4.

‡ Josh. xxiv. 2, 3, 14.

<sup>h</sup> Ibid. xxxi. 19.

sides that of proving how ardently some authors have wished, for the sake of their own hypothesis, to find in Moses, at least one example of paying religious honours to deceased men. “The writers of the Old Testament,” says Mr. Farmer, “properly describe the Heathen gods as *dead* persons, because it was to such that the public worship was more immediately directed.”<sup>1</sup> And then he adds the following note in support of his assertion: “This is implied in that declaration, which Moses required each Israelite to make, at offering the first fruits of every year. *I have not given ought thereof for (or to) the dead* † to any Heathen deity: which supposes that each of these deities was nothing more than a dead person.” Neither this assertion, nor even the note which is added in support of it, is a fact; although the latter is introduced as if it were a declaration of scripture, but with what justice will soon appear.

The method of tithing, among the Jews, was as followeth: They paid a tenth out of all their effects, every year, to the Levites<sup>k</sup>. Out of this tithe, the Levites paid a tenth to

<sup>1</sup> On Mir. p. 197.

† Deut. xxvi. 14.

<sup>k</sup> Numb. xviii. 21.

the priests <sup>1</sup>; for the priests received no tithes from the people, but only the tenth of the tithes paid to the Levites. Now the other nine parts remaining to the people were not to be used, till they had, out of these also, paid a second tithe <sup>m</sup>; which for the two first years, was to be carried to the place where God might choose to record his name, and there to be spent, in feasting with the Levites. But if this place should happen to be at too great a distance for carriage, they might turn this second tithe into money, and buy with it such things as are enumerated by Moses, for the purpose of feasting at the temple; to which he addeth, “Thou shalt eat there, before the Lord thy God, and shalt rejoice, thou and thine household <sup>n</sup>.” This second tithe, every third year, was to be spent at home within their own gates, upon the Levites in the country, the poor, the fatherless, and the widow <sup>o</sup>. This was called by the Jews, the poor man’s tithe <sup>p</sup>. It was not lawful to apply any part of this tithe, when separated, or of the money for which it might have been sold, to those

<sup>1</sup> Numb. xviii. 26—28.    <sup>o</sup> Ibid. 28, 29, and xxvi. 12.

<sup>m</sup> Deut. xiv. 22.

<sup>p</sup> Selden on Tithes, chap. ii.

<sup>n</sup> Ibid. 24, &c.



circumstances that were attended with ritual uncleanness. They were not to eat of it in their mourning for the nearest relation; they were not to send any part of it to other mourners, in distress for the loss of parents, children, or kindred; nor to use it for any purpose whatever, which related to a funeral. Hence, a part of that confession which the Israelites made with respect to tithes in general, relateth to the circumstances here mentioned. The confession itself was to be uttered before the Lord, at the first great feast after the distribution of the tithe of the third year among the poor, and was to be conducted agreeably to the following directions of Moses :

“ When thou hast made an end of tithing,  
 “ all the tithes of thine increase, in the third  
 “ year, the year of tithing (for the poor)  
 “ and hast given unto the Levite, the stranger,  
 “ the fatherless, and the widow, that they  
 “ may eat within thy gates, and be filled :  
 “ then thou shalt say before the Lord thy  
 “ God, I have brought away the hallowed  
 “ things out of mine house, and also have  
 “ given them to the Levite, and unto the  
 “ stranger, to the fatherless, and to the widow,  
 “ according to all thy commandments, which  
 “ thou hast commanded me : I have not  
 “ transgressed thy commandments ; neither  
 “ have

“ have I forgotten them: I have not eaten  
 “ thereof in my mourning, neither have I  
 “ taken away ought thereof for any unclean  
 “ use, nor given ought thereof for the  
 dead <sup>9</sup>.” No one would ever think of applying this passage to *first fruits*! as connected with the worship of Heathen gods, unless reduced to an extreme necessity of finding something like a proof in support of what is nowhere asserted in the books of Moses: For the Jewish law-giver never once intimateth, that either before or during his time, sacrifices were offered to dead men; nor can it be proved that this superstition was then anywhere practised in the world.

§ 4. The state of idolatry under the kings of Judah is thus described: “ Manasseh did  
 “ evil in the sight of the Lord, like unto the  
 “ abominations of the Heathen, whom the  
 “ Lord had cast out before the children of  
 “ Israel: he reared up altars for Baalim,  
 “ and made groves, as did Ahab king of  
 “ Israel, and worshipped all the hosts of heaven and served them: he built altars for all  
 “ the hosts of heaven, in the courts of the  
 “ Lord’s house; and set up a carved image

<sup>9</sup> Deut. xxvi. 12, &c.

“ in

“ in the house of God ‘.” The conduct of Josiah, who put down the idolatry of Manasseh, and all preceding kings, is thus mentioned: “ And the king commanded Hilkiah “ the high priest, and the priests of the second “ order, to bring forth out of the temple of “ the Lord, all the vessels made for Baal, and “ for Ashreh, and for all the hosts of heaven; “ and he dismissed the Camerim, whom the “ kings of Judah had ordained to burn incense in the high places round about Jerusalem; and them also that burnt incense “ unto Baal, to the sun, and to the moon, “ and to the planets, and to all the hosts of “ heaven; and he took away the horses “ which the kings of Judah had given to the “ sun, and burnt the chariots of the sun with “ fire ‘.” The whole idolatry of that people, from first to last, is thus represented by the prophet Jeremiah: “ At that time, saith the “ Lord, they shall bring out the bones of the “ kings of Judah, and the bones of his “ princes, and the bones of the priests, and “ the bones of the prophets, and the bones “ of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, out of their “ graves; and they shall spread them before “ the sun, and the moon, and all the hosts of

<sup>r</sup> 2 Chron. chap. xxxiii. comp. with 2 Kings, chap. xxi.

<sup>s</sup> 2 Kings, chap. xxiii. 4, &c.

“ heaven,

“ heaven, whom they have loved, and whom  
 “ they have served, and after whom they have  
 “ walked, and whom they have fought, and  
 “ whom they have worshipped ‘.”

No one that readeth this minute description, can well avoid remarking two things: First, that if the worship of dead men had really been a part of the Jewish idolatry, it would have hardly escaped the prophet's notice and censure on this occasion: And next, that the writers of the Old Testament are very far from representing the Heathen deities as nothing more than the souls of deceased persons, raised to divine honours, by the ignorance and folly of their worshippers. It must fill every candid reader with unusual surprise, to find any author of reputation in the literary world, perpetually asserting, that the writers of the Old Testament declare the objects of Pagan worship to have been nothing more than dead men; and the rather, since almost every passage in that book, which takes notice of the practice and sin of idolatry, clearly sheweth the contrary in the most express and decisive language. We might soon fill a whole volume with quotations out of Scripture, all affirming, in the most direct terms, that the

‘ Jerem. chap. viii. 1, 2:

nations

nations round Judea, and idolatrous Israelites, worshipped the sun, moon, planets, and hosts of heaven ; but can one sentence be produced, which proves that they ever offered sacrifices to departed human souls, on any occasion ? We believe not.

§ 5. There is but one single instance in the Old Testament which hath the least appearance of a proof, that the Israelites were ever concerned in worship paid to deceased persons of our own kind ; nor can this instance itself have the force of an argument, unless it be received in a sense, not even suggested by the sacred history of those transactions to which it relateth. In one of the Psalms it is said of the ancient Israelites, that “ they joined themselves to Baal-Peor, and ate the sacrifices of the dead <sup>u</sup>.” The term *Meth*, as a participial noun, is used for a lifeless carcase of man or beast, and often for a dead human body, expressly distinguished from the soul or person which is departed ; thus, *the carcase of any soul of man ; the carcase of the soul of man which is dead* <sup>v</sup> : and *Methim*, in the plural number, is put for *mortals*, or *dying men*, as expressive of their state ; and is, in this sense, applied to

<sup>u</sup> Psalm cvi. 28.

<sup>v</sup> Numb. xix. 11—13.

idolaters.

idolaters, doomed to death by the righteous appointment of God <sup>w</sup>, once to persons in extreme misery <sup>x</sup>, and also to wicked worldly men <sup>y</sup>: But it is no where used, that we know of, for deceased persons, unless with the emphatic letter, or article, when it is written; *Hemethīm*<sup>z</sup>, *the dead*. As a participle it is joined with *Pegrīm*, which, together, are twice rendered *dead corpses* \*. *Pegrīm* of itself signifies *dead carcases*; and *Methīm* is also put alone for dead bodies in the grave <sup>a</sup>. Thus much for the use of the word; but what is its meaning in this passage, “They ate the sacrifices of *Methīm*?” Not *the dead*, as denoting departed human spirits; for the term, in this form and construction of it, conveys no such idea. The phrase must signify, that they ate either the sacrifices of idolaters; or the sacrifices of lifeless idols. If we compare the passage with the history to which it refers, we shall soon see in what sense the word *Methīm* is to be here taken. Moses records the circumstance here mentioned in the following manner: “They called the people to the sa-

<sup>w</sup> Deut. ii. 34, iii. 6.

<sup>x</sup> Job xxiv. 12.

<sup>y</sup> Psalm xvii. 14.

<sup>z</sup> Numb. xvi. 48. Jud. xvi.

30, Ruth ii. 20.

<sup>\*</sup> 2 King xix. 35. Isa,

xxxvii.

<sup>a</sup> Psalm lxxviii.

“crifices of their gods, and the people did eat  
 “and bowed down to their gods; and Israel  
 “joined himself to Baal-Peor<sup>b</sup>.” Now the gods  
 to which they bowed down, were undoubtedly some visible objects, either the heavenly bodies, or else symbolic figures. The word, which is here rendered gods, is frequently used in the scriptures for idols; and what one prophet calls gods, another speaking of the same thing styles graven images; and by the phrase, gods, in this very instance, idols or images have always been understood. Thus in the Septuagint, “they  
 “called them to the sacrifices of their idols,  
 “and they bowed down to their idols.” Hence it appears obvious in what sense we are to understand that expression in the above-mentioned psalm. They “joined themselves to Baal-  
 “Peor, and ate the sacrifices of lifeless idols,” which could no more hear and see than a dead body, and in which there was neither counsel, nor power, to help. To those lifeless images, called also by way of reproach, *Pegrīm*, *Carcafes*<sup>c</sup>, the living and true God is very often opposed, both by the prophets and apostles. Moses gives not the least intimation

<sup>b</sup> Numb. xxv. 2.    <sup>c</sup> Levit. xxvi. 30. Jer. xvi. 18.

of offering sacrifices to the souls of deceased men; such an interpretation therefore of that psalm is not at all supported by the history of those transactions to which it relateth.

To these remarks we shall add the opinion of two very learned men, who were perhaps as well acquainted with the language and spirit of the Old Testament Scriptures, as the writers of our own times. Mr. Henry Ainsworth makes the following short observation: “ They were joined unto Baal-Peor, and ate the sacrifices of the dead: By the *dead*, meaning *idols*, unto which the Scriptures do oppose *the living and true God*.” Dr. Owen thus expresseth himself on the same passage: “ They ate sacrifices offered to gods, who could not render them any assistance; but are as a thing dead and altogether vain, from which it would be extreme madness to expect either aid or comfort. Thus the Apostle Paul, in opposition to all the gods of the Gentiles, says, by way of emphasis, that he hoped in the living God. Some understanding sacrifices, *diis manibus*,” (as he expresseth it) “ but that superstition was then hardly in being: All idols are said to

<sup>d</sup> On Num. xxv. 2. Psalm cvi. 28.



“ be dead things with respect to efficacy and  
 “ power.”

§. 6. Such then is the only foundation for those vehement assertions of Mr. Farmer, continually repeated, “ That all the prophets  
 “ of God, with one voice, affirm the Pagan  
 “ deities to have been nothing more than dead  
 “ men ; that this is a fact attested by all anti-  
 “ quity ; that they sacrificed to dæmons, and  
 “ dæmons, as the prophets have shewn, were  
 “ nothing but the souls of dead men ;” with innumerable other things of the like kind. One would imagine that the sacred writers had very frequently, and in the most express terms, assured us, that *all* the Heathen gods were really the souls of deceased persons ; yet they have never once said that *any* of the Heathen gods had been men, but constantly affirm that the idolaters, whose conduct they censure, worshipped the sun, moon, and hosts of heaven. What they have written on this subject exactly agrees with the histories of ancient nations. There were no sacrifices offered to dead men in the days of Moses ; for the Grecian Heroes, the first deified human spirits, were not then even born : Nor was that supersti-

\* Theologoum, Lib. V. cap. iii. § 6. and cap. iv. § 6.

tion ever practised among the nations round Judea, during the time of any of the prophets; no such instance, therefore, can be proved from the sacred history of the Jews.

“ With respect to the writers of the Old  
 “ Testament,” says Mr. Farmer, “ though they  
 “ knew that the Pagans believed in sidereal  
 “ and elementary deities, yet they very pro-  
 “ perly describe their gods as *dead* persons,  
 “ because it was to such that the public wor-  
 “ ship was more immediately directed. Here  
 “ it should be observed, that when they de-  
 “ scribe the Heathen gods as *dead* persons,  
 “ they consider them as what they *really were*,  
 “ not what they were *conceived to be* by their  
 “ worshippers, as some have asserted<sup>f</sup>.” And  
 afterwards he adds, “ The scripture has never  
 “ given the least intimation, that the gods of the  
 “ Heathens were of two different kinds; the  
 “ one such as they *seemed to themselves* to wor-  
 “ ship, the other the *real* objects of their de-  
 “ votions<sup>g</sup>.” Now what are we to conclude  
 from these two curious passages? That the Pa-  
 gans believed in elementary deities, but wor-  
 shipped *only* the souls of dead men? That when  
 they *pretended* sacrifices to the sun and moon,  
 they *really meant* these things for dead persons?

<sup>f</sup> On Mir. p. 197.

<sup>g</sup> Ibid. 243.

That the writers of the Old Testament do not allow them to have worshipped sidereal gods at all? And that *all* their deities to whom they offered sacrifices were nothing more than departed souls of their own kind? If it should be answered, that the above passages neither assert *all* the Pagan gods to have been deceased men, nor that the Heathens *never* worshipped *any other* objects than departed souls of their own kind; and that it is not here said, that the sacred writers will not allow them to have worshipped sidereal gods at all: We might then ask, If none of these things were *intended*, what could the author mean? But this, perhaps, is not worth an enquiry; for truth does not want the dark and covert expressions of the Pythian tripes, which can never be proved to assert what it means to suggest, but may signify this or that, just as the genius and imagination of the reader shall direct. However, neither the Israelites nor the Heathens are ever charged in the Old Testament, with worshipping dead men. The writers of the New Testament also speak of the Jewish idolatry in the very same language: "Then God turned, and gave them up  
 " *to worship the hosts of heaven*, as it is written  
 " in the book of the prophets." <sup>a</sup> Many of

<sup>a</sup> Acts vii. 42.

the Pagans did, without doubt, in after times, offer sacrifices to deceased persons, but this can never be proved concerning the children of Israel, whose idolatry is more immediately described and censured by the prophets.

§ 7. We shall next enquire, by what names idol gods are called in the holy scriptures? The word “Baal” denotes authority, and for this reason is applied to any object of religious worship, as “Baal-Peor,” “Baal-Gad,” “Baal-Berith.” When this term occurs without any epithet or addition, it signifies the æther, or chief of those created gods which were honoured by the idolatrous nations round Judea. This will appear obvious from the following circumstances. “Baal” is generally spoken of as chief of the hosts of heaven, and is, for the most part, introduced as the head of all other idol-gods: Thus it is said of the ten tribes, that “they worshipped all the “hosts of heaven, and served Baal<sup>1</sup>.” It is a frequent accusation against the Israelites, that “they burnt incense to Baal, and walked after “other gods;” and this is given as a general description of their idolatry, “that they served “Baal, the sun, moon, and planets, and all the

<sup>1</sup> 2 King xvii. 16.

“ hosts

“ hosts of heaven.” “ Moloch,” who is also styled in the scriptures “ Milcom<sup>k</sup>,” or the burning god, is the same “ Baal ” unto whom Jeremiah saith, “ they burnt their sons and daughters for “ burnt offerings<sup>l</sup>.” Nothing, therefore, could be more pointed than Elijah’s proposal to the worshippers of “ Baal,” “ The God that answereth by fire, let him be God<sup>m</sup>.” Hence it was fully proved, that the ætherial fire, the chief object of their religious worship, was under the immediate controul of the God of Israel, that rain was withheld or given at his pleasure, and of consequence the various fruits of the earth.

As the word “ Baal ” is applied to any object of religious worship, so the phrase “ Baalim ” denoteth the gods in general; not such as were the souls of deceased men, but the hosts of heaven. This is evident from the language of scripture : “ He reared up altars “ for Baalim, and made groves, and worshipped all the hosts of heaven, and served “ them<sup>n</sup>.” Now to what end did the king of Judah rear up altars for “ Baalim ? ” The answer is here given, “ That he might worship and serve

<sup>k</sup> 1 Kings xi. 7. comp. 2 Kings xxiii. 13.

<sup>l</sup> Jerem. xxxii. 35. comp. vii. 31. and xix. 5.

<sup>m</sup> 1 Kings xviii. 24.

<sup>n</sup> 2 Chron. xxxiii. 3.

“ the hosts of heaven.” The same objects of idolatrous worship, therefore, are in one place called “ Baalim,” and in another “ the hosts of heaven.” “ Ashtaroth\*” was the furrounding or encircling goddess, whether the air or the moon is not material, most probably the former, and perhaps the same with “ the queen of heaven\*.” Her worship was ancient, her dignity great, for her name gave honour to others; hence Ashtaroth signifies the goddesses in general. The sacred historian thus complaineth of the children of Israel: “ They did evil again in the sight of the Lord, and served Baalim and Ashtaroth,” that is the gods and goddesses whom he thus enumerateth in that passage, “ The gods of Syria, the gods of Zidon, the gods of Moab, and the gods of the children of Ammon, and the gods of the Philistines.” “ Ashtarē” was a goddess of great renown, whom the idolatrous nations considered as the source of fruitfulness and prosperity; for such is the import of her name. Hence Ashtarīm, *Blessers*, or according to the Grecian theology, the gods givers of good things, and “ Asharoth” the goddesses from whom were derived, in the opinion of idolaters, success and riches.

\* 1 Kings xi. 5. \* Jerem. xlv. 17—19. † Judg. x. 6.

These terms are in many places improperly translated *groves*; the following examples will put it beyond all doubt. “He set a graven  
 “image of the grove in the house of the  
 “Lord<sup>1</sup>,” that is of “*Asharē*,” the goddess  
 of prosperity. “Josiah brake down the houses  
 “of the prostitutes which were by the temple,  
 “where the women wove hangings or tents  
 “for the grove<sup>2</sup>,” or goddess “*Asharē*.”  
 “The children of Israel forgot the Lord  
 “their God, and served Baalim and the  
 “groves<sup>3</sup>,” that is, *Asharoth*; or the gods  
 and goddesses of the Canaanites, and neigh-  
 bouring nations. “On every high hill, and  
 “under every green tree, they set them up  
 “standing images, and *Asharim*<sup>4</sup>,” *Blessers*, or  
 symbolic figures in honour of those gods to  
 whom they attributed all worldly advan-  
 tages.

Thus much concerning those general ap-  
 pellations which are given in scripture to the  
 Pagan Gods. These phrases denote either  
 power and authority, or else that kind of in-  
 fluence which attends the production of  
 plants, fruits, and animals, and which, accord-  
 ing to the Heathens, was the cause of prof-

<sup>1</sup> 2 Kings xxi. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Judg. iii. 7.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. xxiii. 7.

<sup>4</sup> 2 Kings xvii. 10.

perity and happiness in the present life. But it nowhere appears from the word of God, that they ever ascribed these blessings to the interposition of dead men, or ever looked upon the gods givers of good things, as deceased persons.

§ 8. We are next to examine, what was the real opinion of the sacred writers concerning the natures and characters of the Pagan deities? But we must proceed with caution in this part of our subject, for some unexpected difficulties are thrown in our way; doubts are raised, whether the inspired penmen considered the Heathen gods as having any existence at all or not: If they should be found to deny this matter, all further enquiries concerning the subject will be useless. “When it is said,” to use the words of our author, “*an idol* (that is, a Heathen deity or dæmon) IS NOTHING IN THE WORLD, the meaning is, either that this reputed deity hath no existence in nature, or that he hath no degree of that power his votaries ascribe to him, and is of no more account than if he did not exist.” The writer, in this passage, honestly defines his terms; with him,



an idol, a Heathen deity, and a dæmon, are all one and the same thing, and he hath repeated this notion of his, with no small degree of warmth, in his letters to Dr. Worthington<sup>v</sup>; but whether the apostle Paul looked upon a graven image and a dæmon to be one and the same thing, is by no means evident. And besides, if we allow the existence of the deity represented by the dumb and lifeless idol, although we justly strip him of all that power and influence which his votaries ascribed to him as a god, yet, even in this case, we cannot affirm with truth, that “ he is of no more account than if he did not exist;” for the lowest degree of being is something beyond nonentity.

But the evident design of the learned author is to shew, that the Heathen deities had no real existence in nature, and were not at all distinct from those lifeless statues which were the work of their own hands. Hence he thus writes, “ When St. Paul says, *We know that an idol is nothing*, the expression implies, that the nullity of the Heathen gods or dæmons was a principle admitted by himself.” And he says in a former treatise of his,<sup>x</sup> “ Nor is this censure confined to a

<sup>v</sup> Essay on Dem. p. 229.

<sup>x</sup> On Mir. p. 234.

“ part only of the Heathen gods, it is ex-  
 “ tended to all, without a single exception.  
 “ *They are all vanity. ALL the gods of the na-*  
 “ *tions are idols or nothings :* not powerful evil  
 “ spirits, but mere nullities. In this manner  
 “ the ancient prophets of God spoke of the  
 “ Pagan deities ; and the apostles of Christ  
 “ used the same language ; *We know that an idol*  
 “ *is nothing in the world.* This is not to be un-  
 “ derstood of the mere images of the gods : for  
 “ the Heathens did not regard those images, in  
 “ themselves considered, as real gods. They  
 “ believed them to be the representatives and  
 “ the receptacles of their gods, and in this  
 “ view they spoke of them as gods, and the  
 “ objects of divine worship ; and it is in re-  
 “ ference to the divine powers supposed to re-  
 “ side in them, that the scriptures affirm  
 “ that they are nothing. On all occasions  
 “ the sacred writers deride these pretended resi-  
 “ dences of the Heathen deities, as mere  
 “ earthly materials, polished by the hand of  
 “ the artificer, and the deities themselves  
 “ as equally void of understanding, or ra-  
 “ ther as being nothing distinct from those  
 “ senseless materials, and existing only in  
 “ the imagination of their deluded worship-  
 “ pers.”

This

This writer perpetually confoundeth things which want proof with those which were never doubted by any one, and thus beguileth his reader with *seeming* evidences instead of *real* arguments. As for instance, Who does not know that idols are considered as “no-thing” in the scriptures, *only* “in reference to “the divine powers supposed to reside in them?” Who is not sensible that, “On all occasions the sacred writers deride these pretended residences of the Heathen deities, “as mere earthly materials?” Who ever regarded them in any other light? But is this a proof that those pretended deities to which they were dedicated had no real existence in nature? Solomon’s temple itself, the residence of the true God, consisted of “earth-ly materials,” and was as much “polished “by the hand of the artificer,” as any graven image whatever, and yet the ancient difference between that and idols is still obvious: the one was formed under the immediate direction of God, the other from the mere invention of idolaters; in the one he really dwelt who created the heavens and the earth, in the other, as the sacred writers justly observe, there was neither intelligence, nor power, nor life of any kind: But is this a proof that they also considered “the Heathen deities” themselves, “as nothing distinct from those senseless materials,”

“terials,” and that “they had no existence but “in the imagination of their worshippers ?” Surely not ; unless the mistaken notions which have been entertained concerning any being be allowed as an evidence that there is no such being in the universe. The Persians used no images whatever, they neither built temples, nor raised altars, yet it cannot be justly said, that their gods were mere creatures of the imagination, because they had no statues ; for they sacrificed to the whole circle of heaven, to the sun and moon, to the earth and fire, and to the water and winds. Have the sacred writers any where affirmed these to be *mere nullities* ? They are the very same objects of religious worship with those constantly censured by the prophets, and their real influence in those things which are essential to the present life of man is not only still acknowledged, but much better understood, than in former times.

The objects, therefore, of Heathen worship are said to be “nothing” in the scriptures, *only as gods*. The sacred writers neither deny the reality of their existence, nor its consequences in the world, nay, they affirm their influence to be the appointment of God, and to be under his own immediate controul and direction, in all cases whatever. Hence saith  
Moses,

Moses, "Blessed of the Lord be his land,  
 "for the precious things of heaven, for  
 "the dew, and for the deep that coucheth be-  
 "neath, for the precious fruits from the  
 "sun, for the precious things put forth by  
 "the moon, and for the precious things of  
 "the earth, and the fulness thereof!" But  
 no merit, no intended bounties, are ever as-  
 cribed to those beings in the scriptures, nor  
 are men once considered as laid under the  
 smallest obligation to them for any blessing.  
 Neither Jews nor Gentiles therefore could ever  
 look upon them as objects of divine worship,  
 without renouncing their entire dependance  
 on the supreme God, as the sole author of all  
 good.

§ 9. The two following articles still remain to  
 be determined, Whether the Heathens wor-  
 shipped only the different parts of the ma-  
 terial and visible world; or, whether, toge-  
 ther with these, they looked upon themselves  
 as sacrificing to certain intelligent agents sup-  
 posed to reside in them: And if so, what do  
 the sacred writers mean by the terms *Shedim*  
 and *Dæmons*, under which they describe the  
 Pagan deities? As to the first, the answer is

’ Deut. xxxiii. 13—26.

obvious,

obvious, and given by such authority as will not here be called in question. “ The sentient nature and divinity of the sun, moon, and stars more especially, was strenuously asserted by the philosophers, as well as believed by the common people ; and was indeed the very foundation of the Pagan idolatry. This point was allowed by all, except atheists, or those who were reputed such. These were the first deities of all the idolatrous nations ; and were esteemed, sovereign, and supreme. They are distinguished by the title of *natural gods*. ” It is therefore allowed that idolaters, at least, in their own opinion, worshipped certain intelligent beings, supposed to reside in the different parts of nature. And the same thing is evidently acknowledged by the inspired writers, as appeareth from the general appellations given in scripture to idol gods, who are often, when the language of idolaters is pointed out, styled *Rulers, Blessers, Authors of riches and plenty*.

§ 10. It only now remains to be enquired, What the prophets and apostles meant by *Shedim* and *Dæmons*, under which terms, all

\* *Farm. on Mir.* p. 171, 172.

the Heathen gods are characterised in the Old and New Testament? This point would as easily and as soon be determined as the foregoing, were it not for some learned remarks and queries thrown in our way; which are indeed well devised to keep the truth out of sight. “Moses, as we are told, in his *prophetic* hymn concerning the apostacy of the “Israelites, takes notice of it as a proof and “aggravation of their idolatrous disposition, “*that they sacrificed unto devils (Schedim)* “whom he calls *new gods that came newly up,* “*whom they knew not, and their fathers feared* “*not.*” Now this verse, at least, is not a prediction of things to come, but a declaration of facts already past; and Moses in this passage neither calleth the *Sbedim* *new gods that came newly up,* nor yet gods *whom their fathers feared not.* The general design of the place is evident, even from our common translation. “They sacrificed “unto *Schedim*, not to God: to gods whom “they knew not, to new gods that came “newly up, whom your fathers feared not.” But our author proceeds in his own way: “The Psalmist, in like manner, thus re- “proaches them; *yea they sacrificed their*

<sup>a</sup> Farm. on Mir. p. 248.

<sup>b</sup> Deut. xxxii. 17.

“*sons*

“ *sons and daughters unto devils, (Schedim).*  
 “ If all the Pagan gods were devils, why  
 “ are the *Schedim* distinguished from their  
 “ other gods? Why are they called *new* to  
 “ the Israelites, who had of old worshipped  
 “ the Pagan deities? Why is the worship of  
 “ these *Schedim* mentioned as a matter of *pe-*  
 “ *culiar* reproach? And if these *Schedim* were  
 “ devils, who have a real and extensive power  
 “ over mankind, why are they called *vanities*  
 “ and *idols*?”

To these questions it is answered, that all  
 the Pagan gods were not devils; for if the  
*Schedim* be really distinguished, as this gentle-  
 man now affirms, from their other gods, it  
 is evident that all their gods were not of  
 the same kind; that the *Schedim* are not called  
*new* to the Israelites, neither is the worship  
 of them mentioned as a matter of *peculiar* re-  
 proach above the worship of other idol gods;  
 and that we do not understand these *Schedim*  
 to be *devils*; but even supposing them to be  
 wicked spirits, or other beings who have a  
 real and extensive power over mankind, yet when  
 considered as objects of worship, they may be  
 justly called *vanities*, and their images as pro-  
 perly denominated *idols*. The obvious and  
 extensive influence of the sun, and moon,  
 and air, over mankind, cannot be denied, yet  
 viewed



viewed as gods they are *vanities*, and their statues *idols*.

But he thus goes on: “ The word *Schedim* “ is derived from a verb which signifies *to* “ *lay waste, to destroy*, and ought to have been “ rendered *the destroyers*. It expresses the sup- “ posed cruel nature and character of these “ gods, who were thought to delight in, and “ who were accordingly worshipped by, *the* “ *destruction* of the human species, and who “ required, as appears from the context, even “ *the blood of their sons and daughters.*” To this we answer with all brevity, that the word *Shedim* is not derived from a verb which signifies *to lay waste*, and *to destroy*; that it ought not to have been rendered *the destroyers*; that it does not express the supposed *cruel nature* of those false gods; and that it doth not refer to those mischiefs which they had *formerly* occasioned, but to those bounties which they were *then* thought to give.

But it is immediately added in the same passage, “ Who the gods were that were wor- “ shipped by human sacrifices, all history in- “ forms us; and so has the Psalmist in the most “ express terms, *they ate the sacrifices of the* “ *dead*. They were the great warriors who “ in their mortal state delighted in the slaugh- “ ter of the human race.” To which assertions

we return the following : Who the gods were that were worshipped by human sacrifices all history informs us ; and so doth the Psalmist in express language : *They sacrificed their sons and daughters unto Shedim ; and shed innocent blood, the blood of their sons and daughters, whom they sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan.* But the Psalmist no where says, nor ever intimateth, that they ate human sacrifices offered to dead men. Neither is it any where suggested in the whole word of God, that the idols of Canaan were dedicated to great warriors of the human race ; nor is there one instance to be found on record, of men raised to divine honours by any people because of their past delight in the slaughter of their own species, and yet this is here assigned to be the very reason why those gods were worshipped with human sacrifices.

What is it that such kind of reasoning, and such a method of quoting scripture, will not prove ? No one paragraph, we apprehend, of the same length, was ever penned, containing an equal number of errors with that which we have now considered, and which is to be found in the “Dissertation on Miracles.” The word *Shedim* is derived from a verb which signifies *to pour forth, to shed, to scatter abroad*, and is used in the following senses ; first, to denote

note the all-sufficiency of God in providing for every creature, but more especially in supplying the just with all needful blessings. The Lord said to Abraham, I am *El-Shedi*, *God All-Sufficient*.<sup>c</sup> It is next applied to the breasts of women, which pour forth nourishment for their infants: “And by the *Al-*”  
 “*mighty, Shedi*, who shall bless thee with blessings of heaven, blessings of the *breasts*,

“*Shedim*, and of the womb<sup>d</sup>.” It is used likewise for cultivated and fruitful ground, which pours out sustenance for man and beast; hence the plains of Sodom before their overthrow were called *Shedim*<sup>e</sup> to denote their fruitfulness. Isaac said, “the smell of my”  
 “son is as the smell of a *field, shedi*, which

“the Lord hath blessed<sup>f</sup>.” This word also occurs metaphorically, for that affection and kindness which is the source of various bounties: “Thou shalt suck *the breast* of kings<sup>g</sup>”  
 “that ye may be satisfied with *the breasts*”  
 “of consolation<sup>h</sup>.” The verb itself is often used for shedding or pouring out in an evil sense, but the substantive is rarely if ever applied either to intelligent or other beings in this meaning. We now leave it to the de-

<sup>c</sup> Gen. xvii. 1.<sup>f</sup> Gen. xxvii. 27.<sup>d</sup> Gen. xlix. 25.<sup>g</sup> Isaiah lx. 16.<sup>e</sup> Gen. xiv. 3 and 8.<sup>h</sup> Ibid. lxvi. 11.

termination of our candid readers, whether the term *Shedim* ought to be rendered *destroyers* or *distributers*.

§ 11. Our author, in his “Essay on Dæmoniacs,” refers to the foregoing *assertions* of his as so many decisive evidences, that Moses, by *shedim*, and the Authors of the Septuagint version, by *dæmons*, meant nothing more than deified human spirits, and then adds the following: “These reasons, till I see them answered, will have more weight with me than mere assertions. There is indeed sufficient evidence from the Septuagint itself, to prove that the authors of it did not in these places mean devils, or any powerful and mischievous spirits, but the ghosts of such dead men as the Heathens deified, as appears from an examination of the context in each place<sup>h</sup>.” The Septuagint version is then given of the two passages here mentioned; neither of which conveys even the most distant idea of any human spirits whatever, as we shall immediately see. The words of Moses, under which he characteriseth the objects of Heathen worship, are literally as follow: *They sacrificed to Shedim, not God, gods they knew not: new ones are come up in the*

<sup>h</sup> Page 224. Note <sup>m</sup>.

*neighbourhood* \*, your fathers dreaded not. These terms in the Septuagint version are thus expressed : *They sacrificed to dæmons and not to God, to gods whom they knew not : new ones also came lately up, whom their fathers feared not.* It is then as evident as any thing can be, both from the words of Moses and the Septuagint version, that the *shedim* of the former and the *dæmons* of the latter, are neither the gods which are here styled *new*, nor yet those whom it is said their fathers *feared not*. It is indeed intimated, that those *new ones* which came lately up had been feared by the Israelites as well as the *shedim*, although they were not known to their fathers. Now, what *real objects* of idolatrous worship were there at that time not known to their fathers on the other side of the flood ? The ancient Chaldees worshipped the very same idol gods which are enumerated by Moses, and which were honoured both in Egypt and among the Canaanites. If Moses, by those *new ones*, had understood objects of worship *really* and *properly* different from those known to their fathers, he would certainly have been so careful to mention them by name, as he was

\* The term here used by Moses denoteth nearness of place, not of time, in the following passages, Gen. xviii. 12—24. xxv. 22. xlv. 6. Exod. iii. 20.

in the former case to enumerate the sun, and moon, and hosts of heaven. It seems therefore most probable, that by the *new ones* he meant nothing more than the symbolic figures of the heavenly bodies, which were lately come up among the Egyptians in their own neighbourhood, and before which they bowed down and offered sacrifices, as hath been already shewn. These figures indeed were not known to their fathers, they dreaded them not; but the Israelites had, as appears from Moses, brought their offerings to *Schorim*, which the patriarchs *feared* not.

However, let this article be as it may, for it doth not at all affect our argument, since it is clear even to demonstration, that the term *shedim* is not only carefully distinguished from the phrase *new ones lately come up*, but is also applied to the æther, sun, moon, and hosts of heaven. The Psalmist puts it beyond all doubt; “They sacrifice  
 “ their sons and daughters to *Shedim*, and  
 “ shed innocent blood, the blood of their  
 “ sons and daughters, whom they sacrificed  
 “ to the idols of Canaan.” Here the sacred penman explaineth what he means by *shedim*, the idol gods of Canaan, and these were Baal, the sun, moon, planets, and all the hosts of heaven, as we are repeatedly assured  
 in

in the holy scriptures ; nor doth Moses mention any other idol gods. Now these *shedim* are called *dæmons*, in the Septuagint version, and by the apostle Paul : whence it must be obvious to unprejudiced persons, that the terms, *shedim* in the Old Testament, and *dæmons* in the New, are applied to those gods which had never been men ; and which, according to the above cited author's own confession, were the first deities of all the idolatrous nations, and were esteemed eternal, sovereign, and supreme, and distinguished by the title of *Natural Gods*. The repeated assertions therefore of this writer, that by the Hebrew word *shedim*, and the term *dæmons* in the Septuagint version, nothing more was understood than deified human spirits, are of course totally overthrown ; and the very great number of his rhetorical questions so often asked on this part of our subject, rendered entirely useless.

The next passage which he urges from Moses and the Septuagint, in order to shew, that by *dæmons* nothing was understood but the ghosts of dead men, is this, *They have moved me to jealousy by what is not God ; they have provoked me to anger with their idols*. We can no more find the least intimation of human spirits in this than in the foregoing

passage. However, the *supposed* argument is enforced by the following remark : “ In these  
 “ two verses, the very same persons are  
 “ called, first *dæmons*, then *gods*, and lastly  
 “ *idols* ; which confirms what was observed  
 “ above, that St. Paul, by these three dif-  
 “ ferent names, means one and the same  
 “ thing<sup>1</sup>. ”

We have already seen, that many of the Hea-  
 thens made no use of idols or images in religious  
 worship, yet they were always considered as  
 having *gods*, and that the false deities so often  
 mentioned in the scriptures, were the sun,  
 moon, planets, and hosts of heaven ; for  
 these and other reasons before given, we look  
 upon it to be morally impossible, that any of  
 the sacred penmen should use the terms *dæmons*,  
*gods*, and *idols*, always to denote one and the  
 same thing, or that they should speak of the  
 Pagan deities as nothing at all different  
 from the lifeless images by which they were  
 represented ; for if the inspired writers were  
 not so learned as some modern authors, they  
 had at least as much common sense. “ These  
 “ reasons, till I see them answered, will have  
 “ more weight with me, than *the mere asser-*  
 “ *tions* \* ” of any man, however respectable in  
 himself.

<sup>1</sup> On Dem. p. 224, Note <sup>n</sup>.

\* Ibid. Id.

§ 12. After



§ 12. After the above remark, the following questions are immediately asked with no small degree of spirit: “Now, if the authors of the Septuagint, by demons intended devils, it is natural to ask, when did the Israelites sacrifice to devils? Why are devils called *new* gods? And why are they called *idols*? This is a word that frequently occurs in the Septuagint; but where doth it signify devils in that translation?” To these things, already heard in other terms, a concise answer shall again be given. The authors of the Septuagint version by *dæmons*, in the passage alluded to, never intended *devils*, but only to express the meaning of the word *shedim*; which term, according to the sacred writers, included in it the sun, moon, and hosts of heaven. But whether the Israelites ever sacrificed to devils or not, is a question with which we have no concern, although our author himself may be interested in the decision of it, for he informs us that they used “to offer a goat to Sammael, or Satan<sup>k</sup>.” The *shedim* and *dæmons* are neither called *new gods* nor yet *idols* in the places here quoted. Those images indeed which were consecrated to them, and

<sup>k</sup> On Mir. p. 103.

before which their worshippers offered sacrifices, were justly termed *idols*; and by what appears from Moses they were *new* in his time, not being mentioned in any earlier period; and this well agrees with the testimony of Heathen writers concerning the Egyptians, as the first nation that erected statues to the gods. However, the Septuagint distinguishes the *new ones* of which Moses speaks, from the *shedim* or *dæmons*, with as much precision as it is needful for language to express. But so fond is this writer of the ideas contained in the above passage, that he repeats them again, even in the same page: “ In like manner it  
 “ may be observed with respect to Ps. cvi. 37.  
 “ *All the gods of the Heathens are demons*, that  
 “ what are here by the Septuagint called de-  
 “ mons, are called *dead men*, ver. 28. and  
 “ *graven or carved images*, ver. 36. Now,  
 “ will you allow that devils are dead men;  
 “ or that like the Heathen gods they are ei-  
 “ ther not distinct from, or of no more account  
 “ than, the senseless images that represented  
 “ them? Were the idols of *Canaan* devils,  
 “ by way of distinction from those of other  
 “ countries <sup>1</sup>?”

To these things we again answer, that no writer whatever, our author excepted, ever call-

<sup>1</sup> On Dem. p. 225, Note <sup>m</sup>.

ed one and the same thing by the terms *demons*, *dead men*, and *graven images*; that in the Septuagint version of the passage here quoted, there are no terms which can be proved to signify *dead men*; that we do not allow devils to be dead men; that we consider them to be as different from objects of the idolatrous worship mentioned in this psalm, as the sun, moon, and hosts of heaven, are from the senseless images set up by their worshippers; that the idols of Canaan were never called devils by way of distinction from those of other nations: And we beg leave to add, that if this gentleman thought such queries as these to be either necessary or useful in supporting his argument, he ought for that very reason to have suspected the argument itself; or if he really apprehended that such questions could at all affect the sentiments of those who differ from him concerning the Heathen gods, he was undoubtedly very much mistaken. However, on this occasion we would recommend to him the following just remark, as worthy of some regard: he knows from whom it came.

“ Bare assertions, *how frequently soever they*  
 “ *may be repeated*, and however generally cre-  
 “ dited, *are not proofs* \*.”

\* Ibid, p. 324. Note m.

§ 13. Having thus endeavoured to clear our way, we now return to the enquiry which was stated in the beginning of the tenth section, namely, What the prophets and apostles meant by *shedim* and *dæmons*, under which terms all the Heathen gods are characterised in the Old and New Testament? The sacred writers never concern themselves at all either with the reality or non-existence of the supposed intelligence of the heavenly bodies; nor do they ever deny the extensive influence of the sun, moon, and air, with respect to things necessary for the life of man; but they always speak of that religious worship which was paid to them by idolaters, as the abhorrence of God, and which for reasons already mentioned, was strictly forbidden his own people. We therefore think it evident, that by the term *shedim* Moses neither meant fallen angels nor departed human spirits, but the objects of idolatrous worship in his own time, which were the sun, and moon, and hosts of heaven; these the Heathens considered as distributors of good things. The Authors of the Septuagint version who translated his term by the word *dæmons*, neither intended evil spirits nor deceased persons, but only those Heathen gods which were worshipped in the days of Moses: nor could they

they have used any other phrase with equal propriety ; for had they said that the Israelites sacrificed to dead men, it would have been false, because none such were worshipped in Egypt, nor *then* any where else that we know of in the whole world ; nor doth Moses ever give the least intimation of any religious worship of this kind. Had they said, that the Israelites sacrificed to gods, not to God, they would have conveyed no distinct idea, at least to their Pagan readers : but this language is proper and decisive, *they sacrificed to dæmons, not to God* ; for the Heathens applied that term to their primary and natural deities, whose existence was prior to that of men ; but Jehovah, the God of Israel, was never thus named.

It followeth therefore that the apostle Paul, borrowing the ideas of Moses in the language of the Septuagint, could neither mean fallen angels nor departed human spirits, when he says, “ That the Gentiles sacrifice to “ dæmons, not to God,” but the natural and primary gods of the Pagan world. And altho’ there can be no doubt but that both the Greeks and Romans worshipped deceased heroes in the times of our Lord and the apostles, yet the sacred writers of the New Testament no where take any express notice of it, con-  
fining

fining themselves to general censures of all idolatry wherever practised. This doth not look as if the popular worship among all Heathen nations was chiefly directed to departed human spirits. When the apostle Paul rebuked the men of Lystra who would have sacrificed to him and Barnabas, as gods come down in the likeness of men, he took no notice of hero-worship, while it is clearly intimated that he did not look upon the people as intending sacrifices on that occasion to such gods as were of the human race. Nor did he, when at Athens, where he had the fairest opportunity for doing it, particularly point out the erecting altars to deceased men ; yet both at Lystra and Athens he very carefully attributes to the true God alone those very blessings which, as we are assured in the scriptures, idolaters used to ascribe to their primary or natural deities ; thus a great multitude at Pathros in Egypt, answered the prophet Jeremiah, “ We will certainly burn  
 “ incense to the queen of heaven, and pour  
 “ out drink-offerings unto her as we have  
 “ done ; for then had we plenty of victuals,  
 “ and were well, and saw no evil ; but since  
 “ we left off to burn incense to the queen of  
 “ heaven, and to pour out drink-offering  
 “ unto her, we have wanted all things, and

“ have been consumed by the sword, and by  
 “ famine \*.” But the apostle at Lystra, in direct opposition to all such vain and absurd opinions, said, “ Sirs, Why do ye these things ?  
 “ We also are men of like passions with you,  
 “ and preach unto you, that ye should turn  
 “ from these vanities unto the living God,  
 “ which made heaven and earth, and the sea,  
 “ and all things that are therein; who in  
 “ times past suffered all nations to walk in  
 “ their own ways; nevertheless, he left not  
 “ himself without witness in that *he did good, and*  
 “ *gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness*†.”  
 And while he uses this argument against their intended sacrifices, *we are mortal men like yourselves*, he yet says not one word concerning those religious honours which were paid to gods acknowledged to have been *as mortal* as their worshippers.

So far then are the sacred writers of the New Testament from representing all the Pagan deities as nothing but *dead men*, that they do not take any notice of the worship of deceased persons, even when reasoning with idolaters, where dead men were known to be worshipped; no, nor even when themselves

\* Chap. xliv. 17, 18.

† Acts xiv. 15—17.

were mistaken for gods in the likeness of men. In the beginning of the epistle to the Romans, where the apostle enters directly upon the Heathen superstition, and shews all idolaters to be without excuse, he yet confineth himself to general ideas, which equally include the idolatry of Greece and the Eastern nations, and without specifying particular objects of Pagan worship, saith, “ They changed the  
 “ glory of the uncorruptible God into an  
 “ image made like to corruptible man, and  
 “ to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creep-  
 “ ing things. Wherefore God also gave them  
 “ up to uncleanness, through the lusts of  
 “ their own hearts, to dishonour their own  
 “ bodies between themselves: who changed  
 “ the truth of God into a lie, and worship-  
 “ ped and served the creature more than  
 “ the Creator, who is blessed for evermore.  
 “ Amen.”

\* Chap i. 23—25.



## C H A P. III.

*Concerning the Heathen DÆMONS, and the various Application of that Term among the ancient Greeks.*

§ 1. **T**HE sentiments of Heathen writers, generally misunderstood, have been of late so much connected with the language of the apostles concerning Dæmoniacs, that we cannot well avoid, at least, a brief enquiry into the Grecian doctrine of Dæmons : nor yet can we enter upon it with propriety till we have first considered some historical facts, which are urged against the very being of what we suppose to have been the common opinion of the Greeks with respect to this subject. Mr. Farmer says, and lays great stress upon it too, that “ Euhemerus in his  
“ sacred history, besides recording the pedigree and actions of the Heathen gods,  
“ pointed out the very places where they were  
“ buried.” Now, what doth this amount to? Was Euhemerus credited? Did the Heathens receive his doctrine? If not, what have we to do in this case with the groundless suppositions of *an individual*? Our en-

\* On Mir. p. 194.

quiry respects the *general opinion* of the Pagan world. Mr. Farmer, indeed, feeling the weakness of this testimony, is desirous of supporting it by every means in his power, and accordingly writes a long note for the purpose, which begins thus: "It has been said by  
 " learned men, upon the authority of a passage in Cicero (*de Nat. Deor.* l. i. c. 42.)  
 " that the opinion of Euhemerus was generally regarded by the Heathens as Atheism,  
 " or at least as great impiety. Were this  
 " true, the most that it would prove, is, that  
 " the Heathen gods were not regarded as  
 " dead men by their worshippers, though  
 " they were really such<sup>b</sup>." This, he will be pleased to observe, is enough for our purpose. We care not what the Heathen gods *really* were, since our present business is only with what they *were thought to be* by their worshippers; for this is the rule according to which we must understand the ancient Greek writers concerning their deities: although we do affirm, by the way, that the Heathens would never allow those gods to have been men which Euhemerus was pleased to represent as such, and that the truth of this circumstance doth by no means rest upon the sole authority of a passage in Cicero. Our

<sup>b</sup> On Mir. p. 195. Note 2.

author,

author, after confessing that Plutarch also, in his *Isis and Osiris*, censures the doctrine of Euhemerus as productive of Atheism, adds the following remark: “ Nevertheless, from  
 “ this treatise it appears that the Egyptian  
 “ priests acknowledged that Osiris and the  
 “ other gods of Egypt had been men \*.” It appears somewhat astonishing, that a person of learning could make such an assertion as this. Plutarch was very careful never to attribute this opinion to the Egyptian priests, who were well known to disavow all religious honours to deceased heroes. But these things are not worthy of further notice. Our author proceeds in his text to observe concerning Euhemerus, that “ those who censured were  
 “ not able to confute the substance of his  
 “ system †.” We cannot tell what is meant by the *substance of his system*. It is very evident from facts, that his representation of the gods was not the belief of the Heathen world. “ Euhe-  
 “ merus of Messina,” saith Plutarch, “ con-  
 “ trived out of his own brain an imaginary  
 “ and incredible mythology, by which he  
 “ filled the world with every kind of Atheism,  
 “ describing the gods under the stile of gene-  
 “ rals, sea captains, and kings. He makes  
 “ them indeed to have lived in times very

\* On Mir. p. 195.      † Id. p. 195, 196.

“ remote and ancient, and represents their  
 “ actions as recorded in golden characters, in  
 “ a certain country called Panchoa; which  
 “ yet no one, either Barbarian or Greek,  
 “ ever saw, Euhemerus excepted: he, in-  
 “ deed failed to the land of the Panchoas and  
 “ Tryphilians, who neither have nor ever  
 “ had any existence.”

Here then we see that the substance of his  
 system had nothing for its support, but such  
 things as were never heard of before, nor ever  
 known to exist, either at the time in which he  
 wrote or since. But says our author in the  
 note, “ I admit, however, that the doctrine  
 “ of Euhemerus might even in the opinion  
 “ of the vulgar Heathens, be very liable to  
 “ the censure of impiety; and certainly was  
 “ liable to this censure, if he maintained  
 “ (as possibly he did, or might be thought to  
 “ maintain) that the Heathen gods were *mere*  
 “ men, not advanced to a deified state; or  
 “ that the Heathens had no other gods but  
 “ these. In this view he might well pass for  
 “ an Atheist.” This is a curious circum-  
 stance; our author alledges the authority of  
 Euhemerus in support of his argument, and  
 assures us, that those who censured were not  
 able to confute the substance of his system;

\* On Mir. p. 195. Note g.

yet he gives us to understand, that himself could not certainly tell what the system of Euhemerus was, and that it is very probable his doctrine was considered as impious even by the vulgar. Can there then be a more decisive evidence than this is, that even the vulgar among the Heathens did not look upon their gods as represented by Euhemerus? “ I cannot but extol the wisdom of the Barbarians,” says a learned historian, “ since none of them ever fell into a contempt of the gods. No one, neither Indian, nor Celt, nor Egyptian, ever thought of such an opinion as was entertained by Euhemerus of Messina, Dionysius the Phrygian, or Hippo, or Diagoras, Sofias, or Epicurus. But all those Barbarians whom I have now mentioned, assert that there are gods who attend to the welfare of mankind<sup>d</sup>.” This testimony of Ælian is remarkable and decisive. It would be absurd, therefore, to look upon the sacred writers as using the word *dæmon* in reference to the peculiar notions of Euhemerus, or other atheistical Greeks, rather than according to the common and received opinion of almost the whole world.

<sup>d</sup> Ælian. Var. Hist. Lib. II. cap. xxxi.

§ 2. The judgment and authority of the divine Hippocrates, as he is called, are very often alledged as of great weight against the common notion of dæmons and possessions. “ We are indeed,” says Mr. Farmer, “ expressly informed by Hippocrates, that the “ Greeks referred possession to their gods, “ particularly the mother of the gods, Neptune, Mars, Apollo, Hecate, and the “ Heroes, who were all human spirits<sup>c</sup>.” In answer to this and some other passages, wherein the name of Hippocrates is urged, we shall briefly state his opinion concerning this matter. “ That disease,” (says he in the beginning of his treatise on the Epilepsy) “ which “ is called sacred, appears to me to have in “ it nothing more sacred or divine than other “ distempers, for they all seem to arise from “ one common source. Men indeed, through “ inexperience and admiration, have assigned “ to this complaint a divine cause, since it “ bears no resemblance to other disorders ; “ thus what they cannot understand they “ foolishly suppose to arise from some divinity, and then rashly undertake a cure by “ expiations and charms. But if this disease “ should be considered as divine, because

<sup>c</sup> On Dem. p. 25,

“ there

“ there is in it something worthy of admira-  
 “ tion, for the same reason also, there will be  
 “ many sacred diseases in themselves not less  
 “ wonderful, which yet no one has hitherto  
 “ considered as divine. Those men,” says  
 he, “ who pretend to cure this disorder, talk  
 “ much of the Deity and the Divinity ; but  
 “ their discourse hath in it the appearance of  
 “ impiety, as if the gods did not really exist,  
 “ or as if the power of the Divinity could  
 “ be overcome and reduced into subjection  
 “ by human counsel <sup>f</sup>.” Then follows an  
 account of the several deities to which each  
 distinct appearance of the epilepsy was attri-  
 buted. But Hippocrates doth not once inti-  
 mate, that the mother of the gods, Neptune,  
 Mars, Apollo, and Hecate, were human spi-  
 rits ; on the contrary, he distinguisheth all  
 these from Heroes ; and so far is the father of  
 medicine from denying the power of the gods  
 here mentioned, over the human body, that  
 to their influence he ascribeth those dreams  
 from which he drew certain indications of  
 health or approaching sickness ; and, at the  
 close of each prescription he recommends  
 prayer to the gods, the sun, celestial Jove,  
 the Ctesian Jove, the Ctesian Minerva, and

<sup>f</sup> Hippo. de Morb. Sacr.

Apollo, for such blessings as were wanted ; to the Avernuncian Gods, to the Earth, and Mercury, and to the Heroes, for the averting of such evils as might be feared \*. In another little treatise, he saith, “ It is my opinion that what “ we call Heat is immortal, and understandeth “ all things, seeth, heareth, and perceiveth “ all things, whether present or future †.” There is nothing in Hippocrates that contradicts the received opinion of the Greeks, with respect to the nature of their gods. He is indeed, concerning many things, of a different mind from the inspired writers, but this is no proof that they are wrong.

§ 3. Mr. Farmer, after some heavy charges of ignorance and prejudice against the advocates of real possessions, introduceth the following passage : “ On the other hand, those “ persons whose minds were not disturbed by “ superstitious terrors, and who gained an “ insight into nature, pronounced what commonly passed for demoniacal possessions, to “ be mere natural disorders. This was the “ case, not only with the Sadducees and Epicureans, but also with the Peripatetics,

\* De Infomn.

† De Carn. vel Princip.

“ Aristotle,



“ Aristotle, who was the founder of their  
 “ sect, and who is justly styled the prince of  
 “ the philosophers, denied the existence of  
 “ demons; and maintained, that what is  
 “ called possession is the effect of melanco-  
 “ ly <sup>i</sup>.” “ *Not only* the Sadducees and Epi-  
 “ cureans,” but!—doubtless they were very  
 great men! Now, the Sadducees denied the  
 immortality of the soul, the existence of spirits,  
 and a future state; accordingly, their opinion  
 as to dæmoniacal possessions can be of no  
 weight with those who believe the existence of  
 angels both good and evil. The creed of this  
 Jewish sect is described with equal clearness  
 and brevity by a sacred penman <sup>k</sup>.

The Epicureans, together with supersti-  
 tious terrors, shook off religion of every kind,  
 and wholly excluded the divine nature from  
 the government of the world; for which rea-  
 son their opinion cannot be admitted as an  
 evidence in this matter, because it takes every  
 thing for granted which is at present in dis-  
 pute: Neither can it be allowed, that they  
 were ever remarkable for gaining an insight  
 into nature; by no means; for in this respect  
 they were not to be compared with the advo-  
 cates of *theism*, *morality*, and *religion*. It is

<sup>i</sup> Dem. p. 155.

<sup>k</sup> Acts xxiii. 8.

a real injury to the character of the prince of philosophers to be found numbered with such men. But Aristotle, it seems, denied the existence of dæmons, and we are assured that all the Heathen gods were dæmons; it must therefore follow, if this account be true, that Aristotle was an Atheist; which circumstance would naturally overthrow the validity of his evidence also in the present case. If it be said, that such an inference was not intended, we shall be forced to conclude, that the dæmons, whose existence Aristotle denied, were not the common objects of worship throughout Greece, and therefore not those particular deities to whom our author says possessions were usually ascribed.

It hath been suspected by some learned men, that Aristotle did not believe in those *lower dæmon* gods which were generally received in that age; but thus much is certain, that he acknowledged an higher kind of deities, many in number, though all created. Such he considered those intelligent natures which were thought to rule in the heavenly bodies; and frequently uses the word *Theos* and *Daimonion* for a god, as well as for the supreme deity. So that neither his application of this disputed term, nor his general opinion concerning invisi-  
fible

fible agents, will afford any real advantage to that cause, for the sake of which his authority has been introduced. And, besides, if Aristotle denied that there were dæmons, he must of consequence either deny the existence of human souls after death, or else he must consider the phrase *dæmons* in this case as applied to an order of beings different from men; but if he never denied the existence of our souls after death, then his disbelief of dæmons is a full proof, that they were considered by others as a different kind of beings from departed human spirits. The testimony of Aristotle therefore is clearly in favour of the common opinions concerning dæmons.

§ 4. “ I shall now,” says our author, “ assign those reasons which induce me to think that by demons we are to understand beings of an earthly origin, or such departed human souls as were believed to become dæmons<sup>1</sup>.” And then he proceeds to give his first and chief reason in the following manner : “ Hesiod, and many other poets who have recorded the ancient history or traditions on which the public faith

<sup>1</sup> Farm. on Mir. p. 183, 184.

“ and

“ and worship were founded, assert that the  
 “ men of the golden age, who were supposed  
 “ to be very good, became demons after  
 “ death, and dispensers of good things to  
 “ mankind.” It might have been worth his  
 while to have enquired, what Hesiod meant by  
 the golden age, and the men of that age ?  
 Whether the poet considered himself as describ-  
 ing creatures of our own kind, from whom the  
 Greeks and other nations descended, or a race  
 of beings who never had any posterity ? How-  
 ever, he thus goes on : “ This account of  
 “ demons is fully confirmed by the other  
 “ writings of the ancient Heathens. Many  
 “ passages have been produced by several  
 “ learned moderns, in which demons must  
 “ have the same meaning as in Hesiod.”

The first *ancient* writer mentioned in sup-  
 port of this opinion is Celsus, who wrote  
 above an hundred and twenty years after the  
 birth of Christ. The modern authors here  
 alluded to are Joseph Mede and Dr. Sykes ;  
 from the former of whom, as his name and  
 authority are so often alledged on this subject,  
 we shall select the following remark : “ But  
 “ besides these dæmons and canonized mor-  
 “ tals, their theologists bring in another kind  
 “ of dæmons, more high and sublime, which  
 “ never had been the souls of men, nor ever were  
 “ linked

“ linked to a mortal body, but were from the  
 “ beginning, or without beginning, always  
 “ the same: This sort of demons doth fitly  
 “ answer, and parallel that kind of spiritual  
 “ powers which we call angels, as the former  
 “ of foul-demons doth those which with  
 “ us are called faints <sup>m</sup>.”

§ 5. The ancient Greek writers make the creation of dæmons a part of their cosmogonies, or descriptions of the origin of the world. Thus Plato in his *Timæus*: “ When  
 “ therefore all the gods who visibly move  
 “ round, and those who appear as often as  
 “ they please, were created, he that produced  
 “ the whole spake to them after this manner :  
 “ Ye gods of gods, whose maker and father  
 “ I am, now attend to what I enjoin: Three  
 “ different orders of creatures are yet to be  
 “ made, without which the heavens would  
 “ be imperfect.” He then appoints their share in this business, but reserves for himself the communication of what is immortal and divine; the consequence of which work was, the existence of several minds equal in number to the stars, a mind for every star. After this, he committeth to those generated gods the for-

▪ Mede's *Apost. of Latter Times*.

mation

mation of man. The learned Blackwell makes the following remark on that part of the *Timæus*: “Whether Plato drew his doctrine  
 “concerning these *inferior gods, intelligences*  
 “animating the sun, moon, and planets, immediately from Chaldea (where they had  
 “them ranged into

“*Thrones, Dominions, Princedoms, Virtues, Powers,*

“and considered them as attributes and emanations of the *supreme* being) or whether it  
 “was traced back from the first ideas of his national religion to their *eastern* source, is  
 “at present of little importance.”

Plato afterwards call those beings which appear and disappear as often as they please, “*junior gods*,” whose office it was to preside over human things, and to govern the mortal animal, man, in such a manner as was most equitable and just; and in the above quotation he speaks of their origin as subsequent to that of the gods, who *visibly* move round, and as prior even to the creation of those minds which were thought to animate the stars. But that passage of *Timæus* Locrus to which he there alludes, is still more

<sup>a</sup> Letters on Mythol. p. 403.

full and express. “ All these Nemesis or-  
 “ dered to be executed under the manage-  
 “ ment of dæmons, vindictive and terrestrial  
 “ overseers of human things, to whom God,  
 “ the supreme ruler, committed the govern-  
 “ ment of the world, which is made up of  
 “ gods and men, and other living crea-  
 “ tures.”

§ 6. There is nothing in Hesiod that con-  
 tradicts the above account of Timæus and  
 Plato, as will appear evident on examination :  
 “ The gods, the inhabitants of the celestial  
 “ mansions, made at first a golden (that is  
 “ an excellent) kind of men. These were under  
 “ Saturn when he reigned in heaven ; they lived  
 “ as gods, free from care, from labour, and  
 “ grief ; neither did they feel the effects of  
 “ age ; always the same, they enjoyed a hap-  
 “ py life without any evil : their death was  
 “ a sweet sleep, and being covered in the  
 “ earth they became benevolent dæmons,  
 “ guardians of mortal men : and thus  
 “ girt in robes of air, and moving through  
 “ the world, they mark our good and evil  
 “ actions, and distribute wealth ; for they  
 “ have obtained such royal dignity °.” This  
 exalted kind of beings was it seems made

° Hesiod. Oper. & Dier.

and afterwards invested with airy vehicles in the reign of Saturn, that is, during the period of creation, before the different parts of the universe, according to Hesiod's own account of the matter, were completely framed and adjusted. For his first age, as described in his *Works and Days*, is comprehended in his *Theogony*, or generation of the gods, and was finished before the more settled state of the world under Jove, and of consequence before the creation of our own kind: having described them in that poem, they are not so particularly mentioned in his *Theogony*.

According to the ancient theology of the Greeks, the different parts of nature, during the rise of the world, were perpetually changing, and every alteration in the state of bodies supposed a change also in the condition of such intelligences as were thought to be connected with them; for in their system almost every thing was indued with life, perception, and reasoning. This golden kind of men therefore is represented as not continuing long in their original state, but as quickly passing from those heavier bodies with which they were at first united into airy vehicles. They are not considered by the poets as born, nor is any offspring ever ascribed to them: they are always mentioned as of an earlier origin



origin than the human species; and their nature was thought to be as much superior to ours, as gold is more valuable than iron. In this sense Hesiod was understood by the Greeks, as is obvious from that remark of Plutarch's, which he gives as the received opinion: "Hesiod," says he, "was the first who did properly and distinctly lay down four rational natures (that is created natures) the gods, the dæmons, many in number, and good in their kind, the demi-gods, and men; for heroes are reckoned among the demi-gods." And this author observes, in another place of the same treatise, that the most ancient writers distinguished between the nature of dæmons and that of heroes. Neither Timæus nor Plato advanced any thing different from the poet; their representations agree in every capital circumstance. The philosophers teach us, that before the creation of our own kind, there were gods derived from gods, styled *junior* and *dæmons*, to whom the supreme Ruler committed the management of the world, and the government of mortal men. The poet says, "that while Saturn reigned in heaven, the gods made a golden kind of beings, which

De Defect. Orac.

H

" became

“ became dæmons, and obtained a royal dignity, as the guardians of men and the distributors of wealth :” and Plato calls them, “ rulers together with the greatest God.”

§ 7. As a further explanation of what hath been advanced, we shall add a few remarks upon an observation of Socrates, taken from his defence as given by Plato. He represents the general and avowed opinion concerning dæmons at that time, under two different notions, according to either of which he vindicates himself. “ Is it possible,” says he, “ for any one to affirm, that there are dæmoniacal works but no dæmons ? And do we not suppose, that these dæmons are either gods, or sons of gods from the nymphs or others ?” Now, “ the nymphs” were a part of the cosmogony or creation of the world, and their original was connected with the beginning of fountains and rivers. Dæmons were said to be “ sons of gods from the nymphs,” because those who assigned them vehicles, supposed their thin airy bodies to be the contrivance and work of the primary gods residing in the elements. And that this was their real meaning when they called them “ sons

“ of gods,” appears evident from Aristotle’s remark upon this very passage, which he considers as a decisive argument against the opponents of Socrates, drawn from their own definition of his crime: “ As for instance,” says he, “ a dæmon is either a god, or the work of a god ; now he who supposeth that there is the work of a god, must also suppose that there are gods ’.” To be the “ offspring of a god,” and the “ work of a god,” were, it seems, with the ancient Greeks, very often terms of the same import, when applied to intelligent natures.

§ 8. Many of the ancient Greeks believed, that there were two kinds of dæmons; the one holy and beneficent, the other impure and injurious. Hence they ascribed to the influence of evil dæmons such circumstances and events as they thought inconsistent with the temper and agency of good and friendly spirits; while at the same time they considered these also as superior to the nature of man. This opinion Plutarch calls, “ a doctrine or tradition from very ancient men ’.” Those things which are related of Typhon, Isis, and Osiris, were thought by great numbers,

’ Rhet. lib. ii. cap. 24.

’ Plut. de Dion.

to be the transactions neither of gods nor yet of men, but of some great dæmons whom Plato, Pythagoras, Xenocrates, and Chrysippus, following the most ancient theologists, affirm to be of “ far greater strength than men, and “ very much to surpass our nature in power.” Xenocrates was also of opinion, “ that there “ were in the air which surrounds us, certain “ great and powerful natures, surly and malignant, who rejoice in such things as the observation of unlucky days, scourgings, fastings, “ morose language, and obscene speeches.” There was another kind of intelligent beings, sometimes called evil, not on account of a vicious temper supposed to be in them, but as the ministers of divine vengeance upon the wicked. Such were the infernal dæmons, the dreadful gods, whose office was thought to be very extensive in the government of the world.

Different orders of rational beings, according to the Grecian system, arose from the original constitution of things; that the several parts of the universe might be filled with proper inhabitants, and that there might be both an intimate connection, and a just subordination, throughout the various kinds of intelligent nature. “ In each distinct part of the

‘ De Idid & Osir.

” Ibid.

“ world,”

“ world,” says one of the oldest of the Greek writers, “ there is placed a kind of beings more excellent than the rest; as for instance, in heaven the gods, on earth men, in the sublime space between dæmons\* :” and these were considered as the immediate agents in the government of the world; inasmuch that this opinion was thought to be inseparable from the belief of a divine providence. Ovid also, in his account of the rise of the world, follows the same doctrine, and fills the upper regions with intelligent beings, before he speaks of the creation of man †.

§ 9. The phrase *dæmon* comes from a word which signifieth *knowledge* or *discernment*, and always retains something of this idea, wherever found. It was used by the Greeks as a *general term*, and applied without scruple to every intelligent nature, as will appear from the examples here given. The primary gods, whose existence was considered as prior to the creation of man, and whose original is always connected with the formation of the earth, the elements, and the heavenly bodies, are frequently styled *dæmons* by the ancient

\* Ocel. Luc.

† Ovid. Met. lib. i. ver. 72. Neu regio foret—

Greek writers, but more especially in Homer \*, who, as Plutarch well observes, indifferently useth these two words, sometimes calling the gods dæmons, and the dæmons gods †; and, indeed he applies both terms, in the same sentence, to one deity ‡. But the most common use of this phrase was, to denote that middle rank of beings whose nature and office in the government of the world we have now pointed out. The word *dæmon* was rarely applied to the hero-gods, who had once been men like ourselves; the reason for it may be gathered from the foregoing remark of Plutarch, “ That the heroes are reckoned  
 “ not among the dæmons, but among the  
 “ demi-gods.” This term was used in a very general and extensive sense, as comprehending every thing that relateth to the government and direction of intelligent natures. Hence the word dæmon, in the “ Golden Verses,” seems to be put for that reason or course of life which is attended with happiness, and which can only be discovered by an energy of mind. “ Father Jove, it would release all from  
 “ many evils, if thou wouldest shew to all

\* Iliad i. ver. 222: As well as all the prose writers.

† De Orac.

‡ Iliad xvii. ver. 98.

“ *what dæmon*, or plan of life they should  
 “ use <sup>a</sup>.” It is also frequently applied to any  
 particular event of Providence, as including  
 the idea of some invisible power, through  
 which such things are brought to pass. As for  
 example, “ There are many who pursue very  
 “ weak and unpromising measures, but by a  
 “ *good dæmon*, what appeareth to be dangerous  
 “ in itself, terminates well: there are others,  
 “ who act according to the best advice, and  
 “ yet through an *adverse dæmon*, the end by  
 “ no means agrees with what had been ex-  
 “ pected <sup>b</sup>.”

This term is very often put for that *divine Providence* by which all things in the world are regulated, and comprehends the united influence both of gods and dæmons, to whom the government of the universe, according to the Grecian system, was originally committed. This will appear by comparing the following quotations; the two first from the same author.

“ Providence (*dæmon*) gives riches to the  
 “ worst of men. Neither good nor evil hap-  
 “ peneth unto men without the gods. No  
 “ one is either rich or poor, good or evil,  
 “ without Providence (*dæmon*) <sup>c</sup>.” Aristo-

<sup>a</sup> Aur. Car.

<sup>b</sup> Theogn. Gnom. ver. 162. Also Iliad viii, ver. 166.

<sup>c</sup> Theogn. Gn. ver. 150. 172. 165.

tle, in order to shew that a gift is not always a proof of affection, makes use of some proverbial verses: " Whence," says he, " that  
 " common saying, *the dæmon*, or divine Providence, bestows on numbers the highest  
 " prosperity, not through kindness, but that  
 " they may receive a more signal overthrow<sup>d</sup>?"

This term is so often applied to the supreme God, by all kinds of writers, that quotations would be endless. Xenophon calls him  
 " *the dæmon*, who is able to discern and regulate all things, both at hand and at the  
 " greatest distance, in the same moment, and  
 " with the utmost care; and who shews himself to be unwearied, perfect, incorruptible, administering quicker than thought,  
 " and without error<sup>e</sup>." Whether this be a proof, that " the supreme deity of the Pagans  
 " had once been a mortal man<sup>f</sup>," we leave our readers to judge.

Now, since the ancient Greeks have applied the word " dæmon" to all ranks of intelligent and invisible beings, both good and evil, it

<sup>d</sup> Rhet. lib. ii. cap. xxiv. Cæsar copied this saying, De bel. Gal. lib. i. See also Ælian. Hist. Var. lib. vi. cap. xiii.

<sup>e</sup> Memor. lib. i. cap. iv, lib. iv. cap. iii.

<sup>f</sup> Farm. on Mir. p. 176.



must be allowed, as a natural consequence from the general and extensive use of this term, that the apostles might, on the subject of possessions, apply it to wicked and malignant spirits, without intending either the souls of departed men, or the immediate objects of Pagan idolatry; and since they themselves have defined a possessing dæmon to be an evil spirit, without affixing to it either of these ideas, we have no right whatever to assert, that such was their meaning. We might as well affirm, that Bucephalus, because a quadruped, was therefore really an ox, or that a snail and a serpent are the same thing, because they both creep.

§ 10. “The light of nature,” says Mr. Farmer, “discovers not the existence of fallen angels, much less doth it furnish certain evidence of their power to take possession of mankind, in the manner explained above §.” This is a point which we are by no means inclined to dispute. Now, the Heathens have asserted the existence of fallen dæmons, who were said to be driven out of heaven by the offended Deity, and to be the cause of frequent evils to mankind. “Such like are those dæmons whom Empedocles

§ On Dem. p. 151.

“ thus

“ thus represents, as banished of God, fallen  
 “ from heaven, hurled by an ætherial force  
 “ into the sea, thrown out by the sea to the  
 “ land, and by the earth again to the un-  
 “ wearied sun, who casts them down into the  
 “ whirling and restless air<sup>b</sup>.” These things  
 are expressly mentioned, as the punishment  
 which they undergo for their evil and wicked  
 deeds. Pherecydes, a writer of still greater  
 antiquity than the former, has recorded,  
 “ That there was war at the commencement  
 “ of the world, under Saturn on the one side,  
 “ and Ophioneus on the other; that the  
 “ vanquished party was cast out into the  
 “ ocean; that God, finding matter viciously  
 “ disposed from the beginning, bound it  
 “ together by certain laws, and adorned it;  
 “ and that he cast down such hurtful dæmons  
 “ as were about it, into a state of punish-  
 “ ment<sup>i</sup>.” Nor must that singular testi-  
 mony concerning our own kind be omitted.  
 “ Man revolteth and falleth from his happy  
 “ state, as saith Empedocles, the Pythago-  
 “ rean, being a fugitive from God, and a

<sup>b</sup> Plut. de Vitan. Æreali. Also de Isid.

<sup>i</sup> Origen. contr. Cels. lib. vi. See also Spencer. Annot. in lib. vi. The same fable is in Hom. Iliad. xv. ver. 18. Add also Dr. Clarke's note,

“ wanderer,

“wanderer, relying on mad contention<sup>\*</sup>.” These opinions were delivered, under various forms, among the ancient Greeks. Now, whence had the Pagans such ideas? Not from the “light of nature,” as we have already heard. The knowledge, then, of such things, must have been derived from an higher source; and conveyed to the Heathens by means of ancient traditions, handed down through the posterity of Noah, and preserved more or less among all nations; agreeably with which, also, they constantly speak of the world as formed out of a watry chaos. It is not possible that they should have been so unanimous in asserting what was done before the existence of mankind, unless there had been some tradition or account of things, which was considered as of divine authority. And indeed they all agree, as with one voice, that the knowledge of these matters was received by tradition from the most ancient times; no one ever pretends to call the tale his own.

We have no reason to suppose, that the inspired writers borrowed their ideas of invisible beings from the ancient Greeks; since it rather appears that the Heathens derived their opinions concerning this subject, from the

<sup>\*</sup> Hier. in Aur. Pythag. Car.

obscured remains of the earliest traditions and first revelations of God to mankind. The remark of Origen on this occasion is pertinent ;

“ That the writings of Moses, which are  
 “ much more ancient than either Heraclitus,  
 “ or Pherecydes, or Homer, make mention  
 “ of that evil being who fell from heaven ;  
 “ and that the serpent, from whom Pherecy-  
 “ des denominates one of his chiefs in the  
 “ first war, deceiving the woman with the  
 “ hope of divinity and a better state, by her  
 “ seduced the first man into that crime, on  
 “ account of which he was cast out of Para-  
 “ dise.” However, it is evident, that the  
 Heathens, as well as the sacred writers, do  
 assert the existence of intelligent beings, both  
 good and evil, far superior to the nature of  
 man ; and that the holy scriptures do often  
 represent those beings as employed in the ad-  
 ministration of divine Providence. But, when  
 the Pagans speak of those spirits as “ rulers  
 “ together with the supreme God, and objects  
 “ of divine worship,” they change the truth of  
 God into a lie, and reverence the creature  
 more than the Creator. “ When God deals  
 “ with men by the ministry of angels, it is  
 “ not to be understood that angels or  
 “ dæmons are *necessary* for this communica-  
 “ tion,

“ tion, as Plato and other Heathens pretend ;  
 “ God employs them for reasons into which  
 “ philosophy can never penetrate, and which  
 “ can never be perfectly known but by him-  
 “ self <sup>1</sup>.”

§ 11. “ The authors of the Septuagint,”  
 as we are informed, “ were not unacquainted  
 “ with the Greek learning. They could  
 “ not therefore be ignorant, that the Hea-  
 “ thens did not acknowledge any *created* spi-  
 “ rits; or at least, that according to their esta-  
 “ blished system of theology, the world and  
 “ every thing in it was either eternal or be-  
 “ gotten, not created <sup>m</sup>.” What our author’s  
 real design was in giving such a turn to a me-  
 taphorical expression, we cannot tell, nor shall  
 we conjecture. Moses himself, when he de-  
 scribes the beginning of the world, uses the  
 proper term for parturition, or the bringing  
 forth of young, and says, “ these are the  
 “ generations or *births* of the heavens and the  
 “ earth <sup>n</sup>.” This was spoken in reference to the  
 incubation of the holy spirit upon the surface  
 of the waters, from whom was communicated  
 a quickening and prolifick virtue, diffusing

<sup>1</sup> Hist. of Orac.

<sup>m</sup> Far. on Mir. p. 198, 199, 200.

<sup>n</sup> Gen. II. 4.

the seeds of life through the whole ; by which means the waters and the earth *brought forth* creatures of every kind in abundance, at the command of God. And, on the formation of man, “ God breathed into his nostrils the breath “ of life, and man became a living soul\*.” Moses in another place adopts the same kind of language, and says, “ Before the mountains were “ brought forth, *or born* †:” more instances might be given were it needful. Now, would it not be ridiculous to affirm, that Moses doth not acknowledge *created* heavens, and earth, and mountains, but that, according to his system of theology, “ the world, and every thing in it, “ was either eternal or begotten, not created,” since he even speaks of every kind of animals as brought forth or produced ?

But, this writer proceeds and asks, “ Did “ not the authors of the Septuagint version “ know (what all the world knew) that the “ Heathen gods had once been men ?” To which we answer, that the authors of the Septuagint version could not but know what all the world knew, that the Heathen gods had *never* been men. But, he goes on, “ Shall it “ be taken for granted, that in open contra- “ diction to the inspired writers, and in de- “ fiance of their own inward convictions,

\* Gen. II. 7.

† Psalm. xc. 2.

“ they

“ they were capable of affirming that *all* the  
 “ Heathen gods were of a different origin  
 “ from mankind ? Such a degree of extrava-  
 “ gance and wickedness ought not to be  
 “ charged upon any writers without the strong-  
 “ est proofs.” This writer is so full of zeal  
 for the holy scriptures, that he seems to have  
 forgotten the question in dispute, which is not,  
 whether those translators considered *all* the  
 Heathen gods as of a different origin from man-  
 kind, but whether they believed *all* the Hea-  
 then gods to have once been men ? This is  
 the point to be proved, which is not even at-  
 tempted; and yet, from this very passage, he in-  
 fers their application of the word *dæmons* to  
 deceased persons, with as much confidence as  
 if he had demonstrated, that they never be-  
 lieved the Heathens to have any other gods than  
 men. “ For these reasons,” says he, “ it ap-  
 “ pears to me most probable, that they used  
 “ the word to express such human spirits as  
 “ became dæmons. And I am confirmed in  
 “ this opinion, by attending to the particular  
 “ occasions on which they use it.” What is it  
 that may not be proved with such kind of  
 reasoning ? That they never affirmed *all* the  
 Heathen gods to have been of a different origin  
 from mankind, is surely no solid evidence that  
 they *all* had once been men. The insinuation  
 therefore,

therefore of “ open contradiction to the inspired  
 “ writers,” and of “ extravagance and wick-  
 “ edness” in the supposition, might, all things  
 considered, have been as well spared, lest such  
 expressions should be thought of afterwards ;  
 and besides, language of this kind will never  
 supply the want of argument. So much hath  
 been said of the “ Septuagint version” in the  
 foregoing chapter, that we think it unneces-  
 sary to add any thing further in this place.

§. 12. Mr. Farmer’s second proposition in his  
 “ Essay on Demoniacs,” is as follows : “ By  
 “ demons, whenever the word occurs in re-  
 “ ference to possessions, either in the scrip-  
 “ tures, or other ancient writings, we are to un-  
 “ derstand, not fallen angels, but the Pagan  
 “ deities, such of them as had once been  
 “ men\*.” We looked upon this language as  
 sufficiently expressive of our author’s inten-  
 tion, and considered the reasoning which is  
 subjoined, as an attempt to support this and  
 no other proposition; for it is there affirmed,  
 that the Greeks referred possessions to their  
 gods ; but in his letters to Dr. Worthington,  
 he changes his terms, and states the matter  
 in a different light. “ What,” says he, “ the

\* Page 21.

“ author



“ author of the “ Essay ” undertook to prove  
 “ was this, that the possessing demons spoken  
 “ of in the New Testament were the deities  
 “ of the Heathens, or such human spirits as  
 “ after the dissolution of their bodies, were  
 “ supposed to be converted into demons <sup>p</sup>.” So  
 then, the writer of the “ Essay ” tells us in very  
 express language, that “ by demons we are to  
 “ understand the PAGAN DEITIES, such of  
 “ them as had once been men ;” and the ar-  
 gument of that book, as might be expected,  
 turns upon the impotence of the Heathen  
 gods to do either good or evil. But, in his next  
 publication, he gravely assures us, and marks  
 it out as if a quotation from his own words,  
 that “ the author of the Essay undertook to  
 “ prove, that by demons we are to under-  
 “ stand the Heathen deities, or *such human spi-*  
 “ *rits* as after death were thought *to be con-*  
 “ *verted into demons ;*” accordingly, the ar-  
 gument here turns chiefly upon this suppo-  
 sition, that, in the opinion of ancient philoso-  
 phers, the souls of good men became good dæ-  
 mons, and those of wicked men became wicked  
 dæmons <sup>q</sup>.

Leaving our readers to make what remarks  
 they please on the fact now before them,

<sup>p</sup> P. 24.

<sup>q</sup> Ibid. p. 31.

we pass on to some distinctions which naturally arise out of this *new state* of the question, and which are used as a cover for many things in the "Essay." Our author thus expresseth himself to Dr. Worthington, "In another place you still more grossly misrepresent me, as maintaining that demons were *always* taken to signify departed souls, I never said this of any but *possessing* demons." No? Never "of *any* but possessing dæmons?" You tell us repeatedly, that, when the authors of the Septuagint version say all the Heathen gods are *dæmons*, they mean by the word *dead men*. You assert again and again, that, *all* the gods of the Heathens were *dead men*; nay, you repeat the assertion, two pages afterwards, in the very same letter, and call it "the declaration of Scripture;" and you also say, that "the application of the term demon to the supreme god of the Pagans is, perhaps, one proof, among others, that he had been a mortal man;" and, yet now, when you are represented as maintaining that dæmons were always taken to signify departed souls, you answer, "I never said this of *any* but *possessing* demons." Be it so; you have told us, that, *all* the gods of the Heathens were such dæmons as had been

\* Letter to Worth. p. 32.

men; you must therefore be understood as affirming, that, *all* the gods of the Heathens, together with their supreme Numen, *were possessing dæmons*. We therefore ask, what were those dæmons which the Pagans thought to be neither gods nor deceased men; and whether they were of a nature superior to *all* their gods, even their supreme deity, or of a rank inferior even to the human kind? This gentleman should have been explicit, and have honestly said, without equivocation, whether, by possessing dæmons, we are to understand, according to his "Essay," "the PAGAN DEITIES, such of them as had once been men," or according to his Letters, "*such human spirits* as were converted into dæmons *after death*." If he means to confine his readers to the latter ideas, then we also ask, What have the Heathen gods to do with the subject; and what are his proofs that such was the intention of the apostles? For, all the arguments which he hath yet offered, to shew, that possessing dæmons were deceased men rest upon the supposed nature and character of the Heathen deities. But, if this *new state* of the question be designed to shew, that, possessing dæmons were partly Heathen deities, and partly such human spirits as were converted into dæmons after death, then let it be shewn, where we

must draw the line ; what gods are to be exempted ; which included ; what are the evidences that such was the meaning of the sacred writers ; and by what rules we may know, when their language is to be ascribed to the Pagan deities, and when their terms are to be referred to such human spirits as were converted into dæmons after death ?

§ 13. Dr. Worthington says, and, with great truth, “ That according to the doctrine  
 “ of the Essay, the twelve greater gods, vulgarly supposed to have been deified mortals,  
 “ were possessing dæmons, but these in  
 “ Plato’s estimation existed from all eternity.”  
 To this Mr. Farmer answers : “ Your argument proceeds on two suppositions, highly  
 “ extravagant. It supposes, that, because possessing demons were considered by the Heathens as deified men, therefore all deified  
 “ men were possessing demons : and it further  
 “ supposes, that, we are to form our judgment  
 “ of the twelve greater gods, by the speculations of a philosopher who rejected the  
 “ common opinion concerning them, merely  
 “ because he deemed it absurd, rather than  
 “ by the whole current of Heathen antiquity, and the declarations of Scripture,  
 “ which represent all the Heathen gods as  
 “ dead

“ dead men’.” We cannot find any thing “ extravagant” on this occasion, unless it be our author’s own conduct, who uncandidly censures another for supposing him to maintain that all deified men were possessing dæmons, although himself asserts the very idea while he passes the censure. However, we do repeat it, after Dr. Worthington, not as a “ supposition” but as a fact, that “ the twelve greater gods,” whom both poets and philosophers represent as eternal, “ were, according to the doctrine of “ the Essay, *possessing dæmons* ;” and we are not a little surprised, that, this writer should attempt to deny, that, he ever said or supposed what he hath so often asserted under various forms. It would be in vain to reason any further concerning this matter, we shall therefore briefly state a few facts, and leave others to judge.

Notwithstanding the affirmations of this gentleman, in the passage before us, himself well knows, that, neither “ the *whole current* “ of Heathen antiquity, nor *any declaration* “ of Scripture,” ever “ represented *all* the “ Heathen gods as dead men :” himself owns, that, “ the sacred writers knew that the Pagans “ believed in sidereal and elementary deities ;”

• Lett. to Worthing. p. 35.

himself informs us, that, “ Sanchoniathon represents the most ancient nations, particularly the  
 “ Phenicians and Egyptians, as acknowledging  
 “ only the natural gods, the sun, moon, planets,  
 “ and elements ;” nay, without any mark of disapprobation, himself also quotes the opinion of Plato, as declaring “ that the first Grecians  
 “ likewise held *these only* to be gods, as did  
 “ many of the Barbarians in his time ;” and yet the moment Dr. Worthington quotes this very same Plato, for the very same purpose, it becomes “ a supposition highly extravagant,” that  
 “ we are to form our judgment of the twelve  
 “ greater gods by the speculations of a philosopher !” But in Mr. Farmer it was candid to urge the authority of Aristotle on this point, in opposition to the opinion of the vulgar, the poets, and all the philosophers before him, that were advocates of theism and religion ! The Heathens cry out with one voice, that notwithstanding religious honours were frequently paid to deceased men, among the Greeks and Romans, yet their common objects of worship were gods which, in their own judgment, came into existence along with the different parts of nature, before the creation of man. But, according to Mr. Farmer, this was all false ; for, he answers, that, their gods,  
 in

in their own opinion, were of an earthly origin; that the more immediate objects of popular adoration among them were deified human beings; and in this he perseveres with increasing zeal, although the Heathens repeatedly affirm, that, many nations never would give religious honours to deceased heroes. The Heathens maintain, that, a first Cause, the Creator of all things, was acknowledged among them, almost every where, whom they have described in very expressive language; and we are moreover informed by an apostle, that “when they knew God, they glorified him not as God \* :” But, Mr. Farmer assures us, that, their supreme deity had once been a mortal man, that he had a father and a mother, a grandfather and a grandmother! Moses and the prophets have repeated it, times without number, that the sun, moon, planets, and all the hosts of heaven, were the objects of religious worship in the nations round Judea, and among the idolatrous Israelites; but, Mr. Farmer keeps his ground with an unshaken resolution, and says, with respect to the writers of the Old Testament, though they knew that the Pagans believed in sidereal and elementary deities, yet they very properly describe their gods as *dead* persons; as what

\* Rom. i. 21.

they *really were*: and to complete the whole he asserts, that, “ the declarations of Scripture represent *all* the Heathen gods as *dead men*.” Thus he not only rejects the testimony of the ancients, concerning what relateth to their own times, but, in fact, he also affirms, that, those things were not the belief and judgment, either of the inspired or Heathen writers, which both the inspired and Heathen writers constantly affirm to be their belief and judgment.

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#### C H A P. IV.

*Concerning the DÆMONS mentioned in the Gospel, and the Application of that Term by the sacred Penmen.*

§ 1. **W**E shall next enquire, in what sense Christ and his apostles used the word *dæmon*, when they spake of possessions; for we have no right to affix a meaning to this term which themselves have never acknowledged? And, as a certain writer beautifully and justly remarks, “ It ought not to be presumed or taken for granted, that any person whatever, who hath no intention



“ tion to deceive, uses words in a sense dif-  
 “ ferent from the rest of the world, unless  
 “ he gives express notice of his so doing.  
 “ Whoever assumes a liberty of giving a new  
 “ meaning to words, without explaining it,  
 “ cannot intend to enlighten, but to con-  
 “ found or insult the understandings of men.  
 “ A conduct of this kind would be peculiarly  
 “ heinous in an instructor of the people, who  
 “ never look further than to the obvious and  
 “ ordinary sense of words, of such especially  
 “ as occur continually in common conversa-  
 “ tion. Shall we then cast so foul a reproach  
 “ as this on Christ and his apostles, charge  
 “ them with guilt of the deepest dye? Shall  
 “ we take it for granted, that they were thus  
 “ guilty without the least shadow of proof?”—  
 “ If they had assigned a new and peculiar  
 “ meaning to the word demon, would not  
 “ they have given us notice of their doing it?  
 “ Was not such notice necessary to prevent  
 “ mistakes?” Justice requires our diligent  
 attention to these excellent remarks: Would  
 it not then be an heinous crime in us to wrest  
 the words of the inspired writers from their  
 obvious design, and affix to their terms an  
 arbitrary meaning, which themselves have

² *Farm. on Dem.* p. 42—44.

not even once suggested? They have not particularly explained the sense in which they used the words *God*, or *spirit*; there was no occasion for it; they applied these terms in their common and ordinary signification, sometimes to men, sometimes to the objects of Heathen worship, and sometimes to an evil being, as well as to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. It would be a very singular and perverse inference, should any one attempt to prove, from this circumstance, that the word *God* always signified a man. Surely there is more honour in the world than to admit such kind of reasoning, especially when it is a direct violation of our own rules, which in this case must have the appearance of artifice, rather than canons intended for the regulation of our own conduct. Having therefore fairly stated our principles of interpretation, we may proceed.

§ 2. We shall first consider that term under which the prince of dæmons is mentioned by the enemies of our Lord. “Beelzebub,” as we are informed, “was a god of the Philistines, who “had a temple and oracle at Ekron.” “This “name,” it seems, “was not given him by way “of contempt, because it was used by Akaziah,” [a king of Israel] “at the very time he  
 7 “ was

“ was acknowledging his divinity <sup>b</sup> ;” all which things are readily granted. But, that, “ he was styled Beelzebub from his power of driving away flies ;” or that “ it was customary with the Heathens to call their gods, in this sense, by the name of those insects from which they were believed to deliver their worshippers,” we can by no means allow, It was never customary with mankind, neither can it be reconciled with common sense, to style any deity the god of those creatures which he delights to destroy. “ The god of flies” was, beyond all doubt, thought to be the producer or nourisher of insects. A poet of our own will better explain the reason of this epithet, *Zebub*, than some learned critics and modern divines have done.

“ *Nor shall the muse disdain  
 “ To let the little noisy summer-race  
 “ Live in her lay, and flutter thro’ her song :  
 “ Not mean tho’ simple ; to the sun ally’d,  
 “ From him they draw their animating fire <sup>c</sup> .”*

The Phenicians worshipped the sun, who was undoubtedly meant under the term “ Beelzebub,” the most famous of all the Heathen deities for his oracles. But, that, the Pharisees,

<sup>b</sup> Farm. on Dem. p. 32—42.

<sup>c</sup> Thompson’s Season’s : Summer, ver. 233—237.

in their accusation of Christ, alluded to this “god of Ekron,” is by no means evident, since they do not even mention his name. However, rather than enter upon any needless dispute, we shall grant to the author here quoted the following remark. “Whether therefore, “Beelzebub and Beelzebul be different names, “or the same name with different terminations, “they describe the person whom the Heathens “regarded as their chief deity <sup>c</sup>.” But, we never can admit the next assertion, without offering violence to the general history of mankind, and abusing the words of Scripture, that, “if Beelzebub was a Heathen “demon or deity, he was no other than a “deified human spirit; or that he was really “such in the estimation of those Pharisees “who charged Christ with casting out “demons by his power <sup>d</sup>.” We have abundantly proved, from the declaration of the Heathens themselves, and from the testimony of Scripture, that, their chief deities were the æther, sun, moon, planets, and hosts of heaven <sup>e</sup>. The sacred history, which mentions “the god of Ekron,” never says that he had

<sup>c</sup> Farm on Dem. p. 37. Note <sup>r</sup>.

<sup>d</sup> Ibid. p. 38, 39.

<sup>e</sup> 2 Kings i. 2. 3. 6. 16.

once been a man, nor ever intimates that any human spirit was worshipped under the name "Beelzebub;" nor do the apostles even suggest that the Pharisees affixed any such idea to "Beelzeboul." It is not in this author's power to produce one ancient testimony which affirms "the god of Ekron" to have been a deified human spirit. The repetition of groundless assertions will never turn them into truths. While this gentleman refuseth to admit what the sacred writers have *expressly affirmed*, he demands of us to consider them as maintaining what they have *never advanced*. What can be more unreasonable than this!

§ 3. If it should be asked, Did the sacred writers consider the chief god of the Heathens and the devil to be one and the same being? We answer, that, neither Christ nor his apostles ever made use of the word "Beelzeboul" to denote the prince of dæmons; they only inform us, that, the Scribes and Pharisees urged it in this sense when they objected to his miracles. Our Lord himself, in his answer, changes the term for that of "Satan:" he would not use the word "Beelzeboul," but, chose one of a more determinate signification, and frequent use, among the Jews, that he might clearly and distinctly point

point to his real enemy, and thus shew *what power* he meant to destroy, and from this circumstance fully prove, that, there could be no union between him and the chief of evil spirits. If it should be still asked, " Upon what grounds then is it concluded " that by Beelzebub, we are to understand " the devil, if by the devil be meant a fallen angel ? Can this be proved from the import of the name ? " To this we answer, that, the common and general use of the word " Beelzeboul," and the import of the term, are not here the subject of dispute ; our business is *only* with *that sense* according to which Christ himself understood the Pharisees, when they charged him with casting out dæmons through " Beelzeboul ; " and he evidently considered the word as put on that occasion for the most hateful being in the universe, nor is there any reason to suppose that his enemies intended less by the term.

It is in vain to tell us, that, " There is no " kind of affinity between *Beelzebub* and *devil* either in sound or meaning ; and that " the Jews were not accustomed to call the " devil by the name of Beelzebub '." The former of these assertions we know to be true

\* *Farm. on Dem.* p. 36, 37.      † *Ibid.* p. 37.

as well as our author, and with respect to the latter, we concern not ourselves at all, since, if it will be of any advantage to him, we shall readily grant what is of much greater importance, that, neither the prophets nor apostles were ever accustomed to call the devil by the name of "Beelzeboul." But, what of all that? Will it prove that they have never mentioned any of their countrymen as using the word "Beelzeboul" for the devil; or, that if they should charge any Jew with thus using the term they ought not to be credited? These would be strange inferences indeed! The Lord Jesus understood his enemies as using the word "Beelzeboul" for "Satan," the head of those unclean spirits which "he cast out by "the finger of God." This is evident from his answer: "Some of them said, he casteth out "dæmons through Beelzeboul the prince of "dæmons."—"But he *knowing their thoughts* "said unto them, Every kingdom divided "against itself is brought to desolation."—"If "Satan also be divided against himself, how "shall his kingdom stand? For ye say, that "I cast out dæmons through Beelzeboul "" Here the Evangelist lets us see, not only why our Lord changed the term, but also, the pro-

\* Luke xi. 15, &c. Matt. xii. 24, &c.

priety of his conduct on that occasion; *he knew their thoughts*, and was justified in giving this answer, “ If *Satan* be divided against himself his kingdom cannot stand.” And the sacred writers themselves by the term “ Beelzeboul,” understood the Pharisees as intending an unclean spirit, and on this circumstance ground the justice of that declaration, “ He that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, neither in this world, nor in the world to come; because they said he hath an unclean spirit.” And, it may be justly doubted, whether those Jews could have been fairly charged with such blasphemy as shall never be forgiven, had they *not meant* to ascribe the miracles of Christ to the power of the devil. And, besides, did any one of the sacred writers ever apply the term *Satan* to the soul of a *deceased man*; Or, will any one say that this use of the word was ever customary among the Jews? Surely not. Would our Lord take the liberty of affixing an idea to this term never heard of before in the world, without explaining it? Are we not told, that, “ A conduct of this kind would be peculiarly heinous in an instructor of the people?” And would it not be still more so at a time when the teacher himself refused a term made use of by his adversaries,



versaries, and professedly from *his knowledge of their thoughts* substituted another in its room, that he might more distinctly point out their real intentions, and thus answer the reasoning of their hearts against him? "Shall we then cast so foul a reproach on Christ and his apostles? Shall we take it for granted that they were thus guilty, without the least shadow of a proof?" Far, very far be it from us that such thoughts should lodge in our hearts!

§ 4. "Beelzebub," says Mr. Farmer, "is called the prince of demons, not of devils. It would therefore be foreign from our present subject to enquire who the devil is<sup>a</sup>." Now, we can by no means look upon our author as serious in this inference, for, he himself tells us in the beginning of this very paragraph, "that the phrase *devils* in the plural number *is* never applied to any evil spirits, but is used to denote slanderers or calumniators, as must be allowed by all\*." We cannot therefore suppose, that, he would wish to be understood as reasoning in such a manner as this: "Beelzebub is not called the prince of slanderers, who, as is con-

<sup>a</sup> On Dem. p. 14. \* Ibid. p. 13. Note n.

“ fessed by all parties, have nothing to do  
 “ with possessions ; it would therefore be fo-  
 “ reign from our present subject to enquire,  
 “ who the devil is, which many look upon to  
 “ be the chief of possessing spirits.” This gen-  
 tleman has too much good sense not to discern,  
 that, such kind of reasoning as the above is  
 by no means conclusive. He had indeed some  
 cause to be afraid, that, an enquiry into what  
 is meant by the term *devil* would either defeat  
 his whole scheme, or else force him to avow  
 what he no where chooses to confess. We  
 must therefore look upon the above passage as  
 intimating to his friends an apology for wav-  
 ing this most difficult and intricate part of  
 the subject ; accordingly he proceeds with  
 some thing like a concession, as if he meant  
 to soften the foregoing inference. “ It is in-  
 “ deed commonly apprehended, that demons,  
 “ and their prince, are the very same spirits as  
 “ the devil and his angels \*.” And, after point-  
 ing out the arguments that are urged in sup-  
 port of this objection, he adds, “ Dr. Lard-  
 “ ner seems to admit its force. For he says,  
 ““ the devil is often called Satan and Beel-  
 ““ zebub.” It doth not however seem to me  
 “ to follow from the passage under considera-  
 “ tion, that the devil is ever called Beelzebub.

\* On Dem. p. 14.

“ For the term *Satan* is not appropriated  
 “ to one particular person or spirit, but sig-  
 “ nifies *an adversary* or *opponent* in general.  
 “ The Jews called every demon by this name,  
 “ and used it in the plural number. Samael  
 “ is styled by them *the prince of Satans*. Nay,  
 “ the very words of our Saviour, *How can*  
 “ *Satan cast out Satan*, if taken in their strictest  
 “ sense, imply that there were several Satans.  
 “ And our Lord might only mean, *that it*  
 “ *was unreasonable to suppose that one demon*  
 “ *would cast out another*. Or, if you under-  
 “ stand him to the following purpose: “ Were  
 ““ Beelzebub, whom you regard as chief of  
 ““ *possessing* demons, to expel himself, which  
 ““ would in effect be the case were he to ex-  
 ““ pel his agents and instruments, he would  
 ““ act against his own interest, and defeat his  
 ““ own schemes:” it will not follow from  
 “ hence, that Beelzebub, was considered as  
 “ the same person with the devil. It doth not  
 “ appear, that, there is any reference here to the  
 “ latter. He and Beelzebub, might be re-  
 “ garded as two distinct persons, and yet each  
 “ be called *Satan*<sup>k</sup>.”

There is very little to be found in all this  
 that can be justly considered as having the

<sup>k</sup> Id. Ibid. &c..

force of an argument. The author, indeed, doth not profess in words to have proved any thing, though he would be understood as having refuted the common opinion. He has recourse to his usual method, which is to draw his reader into a belief of what himself does not choose to assert. Thus, he says, “ The  
 “ term *Satan* is not appropriated to one par-  
 “ ticular person or spirit, but signifies an ad-  
 “ versary in general.” What is this to the purpose? We want to know *who* or *what* is meant by that particular adversary which is here called “ Satan.” Hath this writer ever told us? Will he say that this term was ever applied to a *dead man*? Has he even attempted to prove, that, this word was ever put for any invisible being, except the devil? Will he say, that, any deceased person was ever called *Satan*, and the *strong one* whom the Son of God is to bind and strip of all his armour? We cannot but admire, how careful this writer is never to assert any of these things; and yet, when he comes to apply the passage here quoted, you would suppose, that he had proved them all. “ Our Lord ” it seems “ might *only*  
 “ mean, *that it was unreasonable to suppose*  
 “ *that one demon would cast out another.*” Here is a truth which no one ever called in question, introduced only as a matter of *possibility*,

*bility*, and it is put into Italic characters, as if the supposition deserved unusual attention. But, this was intended as a preface to another article not quite so obvious, which is yet put on a level with the foregoing, and thus, in words at least, is rendered equally probable with it, by that well chosen and happy term *might*: “The devil and Beelzebub *might* be “regarded as two distinct persons, and yet “each be called *Satan*.” Here ends the argument, which rests on a bare *possibility*.

Our author then, as we see, does not deny, that the words “Satan” and “Beelzebub” are put for the same person or spirit; he only maintains, that, allowing this circumstance, it doth not hence *certainly* follow, that, the devil was understood by either of those terms. He by no means asserts, that the word “Satan” is *not* put for the devil in this passage; he only says, that, it *may be* used for a different person. Where now is the proof, that, the terms “Beelzebub” and “Satan” are in the Gospel applied to departed souls of our own kind; or, that, the prince of possessing dæmons had once been a man? Hath one evidence been produced in support of these facts? We have seen indeed some striking inferences, and there are others yet to come. “Beelzebub was the prince of *the possessing de-*  

K 3

“mons,

“ *mons*, in the estimation of the Pharisees ;  
 “ and therefore in their estimation, was a  
 “ human spirit ; as will be shewn imme-  
 “ diately upon the express testimony of  
 “ a learned Pharisee <sup>1</sup>”. How much have  
 we lamented, not only, that, our author  
 should afterwards forget *this express testimony*,  
 but also, that, he unhappily neglected to give  
 us a reference to it, in the margin ! For then,  
 perhaps, we might have gratified our cu-  
 riosity, both in finding where so great a man as  
 “ Beelzebub ” lived, and, in obtaining full  
 proof, that, the Pharisees, who opposed our  
 Lord, knew this said “ Beelzebub ” to have  
 been a mortal creature like ourselves. How-  
 ever, we are fully persuaded, that, this gentle-  
 man will never be able to produce a single in-  
 stance so old as Christ and his apostles, wherein  
 it is *expressly* said, that “ Beelzebub ” was a  
 human spirit, nor, to point out one passage in  
 the whole Bible wherein the term “ Satan ” is  
 applied to the departed soul of *a dead man* ;  
 far less will he be able to prove, that, any de-  
 ceased prince or hero was the *strong one*, whom  
 the Son of God was to bind and strip of his  
 armour.

<sup>1</sup> On Dem. p. 38.

§ 5. We might soon write long notes as well as our author, giving an arbitrary and specious explication of all those passages in which the terms *Devil* or *Satan* occur, so as to make them exactly coincide with our own system, could we in conscience offer such devices as arguments on a subject of this nature; and we might too as easily answer all the interpretations of this kind which Mr. Farmer hath been pleased to give, without using any such violence to the common acceptation of words as he hath done. But, concerning those places in which there is a reference to the “Devil” and “Satan,” we beg leave to put him in mind of his own words, in his second Letter to Dr. Worthington: “It were to be wished, that “instead of bare assertions, you had favoured “the world with solid proofs of the truth “of your interpretation of them<sup>m</sup>.” In that letter, after observing that the term *Satan* often occurs as an appellative, and denotes in the New Testament what it does in the Old, an *enemy* or *adversary* in general, a very long note is subjoined, containing supposed examples, which begins in the following manner: “I do not affirm that the term Satan does “never refer to a wicked spirit<sup>n</sup>.” It is a

<sup>m</sup>Page 52. <sup>n</sup>Ibid. p. 54. Add. on Dem. p. 17, 18.

pity, that, this writer should so much indulge himself in the use of dark and covert sentences which may beguile, but can never inform, a reader. What are we to understand here by a wicked spirit? Should we consider the passage before us as granting, that, the term *Satan* is sometimes applied to the chief of fallen angels, or to a wicked spirit superior to the nature of man, he would most likely speak of it as very uncandid in any one to charge him with allowing not only what he never said, but what is injurious to his own argument. Were we to consider him in this place, as acknowledging that the term “Satan” may sometimes refer to the soul of a deceased man, and then ask, What does this author mean by his *may refer to a dead man*? Who contends for any such thing besides himself? Who but himself ever advanced such an absurd idea as this, that, our Lord applies the term *Satan* to a *dead man*? He would immediately answer, as on a former occasion already noticed, *I am grossly misrepresented, I never affirmed any such thing.*

But, he thus proceeds in the text of the foregoing passage: “When the ancient Jews applied it (the term Satan) to evil spirits, they did by no means confine it to any one in particular, nor even to any one species of  
“ them.”



“ them \*.” We have nothing to do with the *fancies* of Jewish rabbins ; our business is with the sacred writers. Will this gentleman take upon him to affirm, that, the apostles have any where applied the term “ Satan ” to the soul of a dead man ? If so, let him name the place ; if not, there is then an end of his argument. But, he thus goes on : “ The word, therefore “ is as applicable to the prince of possessing “ demons, as to the chief of fallen angels : ” *The word, therefore, is as applicable ! Wherefore* is it as applicable ? “ Have not I said that “ the ancient Jews did not confine it to one “ species of evil spirits ? ” But, Sir, where is the proof, that, even those rabbins whom you call “ ancient Jews,” ever applied it to more species of evil spirits than one ; and where is the evidence that they ever applied it to dead men ? Have you even offered to give us any ? And, supposing you had any to give, would this alone prove, that, the *sacred writers* have applied the word *Satan* to a dead man ? Surely not. “ But it is as applicable to the “ prince of possessing demons, as to the “ chief of the fallen angels.” So then, the supposition in the “ Essay,” “ that the devil “ and the prince of possessing dæmons *might*

\* Letter to Worth. p. 54 to 58 inclus.

“ be regarded as two distinct persons,” is, in the next publication, grown up to a matter of certainty ! Hath this gentleman ever favoured us with one proof of the fact ? Must every person or thing yield to his unsupported assertions ? But, he proceeds—“ And it is the “ *subject* alone that must determine who the “ Satan or adversary is that is intended in “ any particular passage of Scripture, when “ it refers to evil spirits. If *possession* be the “ subject, the Satan or enemy is Beelzebub ; “ if *temptation* the *Satan* or enemy is the “ devil.” Without enquiring into the immediate design of our author in this passage, which *might* perhaps be mistaken ; we beg leave to ask the following questions : Would it not be unreasonable for any one to consider the prophets themselves as seeking to “ the god “ of Ekron,” because they have told us that “ Ahaziah the king of Israel ” did so ; and would it not be altogether as unjust to assert, that, the holy apostles attributed possession to “ Beelzebub,” as the great enemy of mankind, merely because they have informed us that the Pharisees did this ? If it was Mr. Farmer’s design to represent the writers of the New Testament as intending “ Beelzebub ” to be the enemy, whenever they speak of possessions by evil spirits, he not only acted an ungenerous part,

part, but, shewed something like a want of reverence for the word of God. When the Pharisees charged Christ with “ casting out dæmons through Beelzebub,” our Lord refused to make use of the term after them, and changed the word for one more determinate and decisive; and, when his own disciples in private related to him with joy that “ dæmons ” were subject to them through his name,” he said, “ I beheld Satan fall, as lightening from “ heaven ”.”

We have, therefore, the highest authority for saying, that when the apostles speak of evil spirits, if *possession* be the subject, “ Satan ” or “ the devil,” and none other, according to them, is the chief enemy; if *temptation*, the enemy is still the same, called either “ Satan ” or “ the devil.” We understand the apostles, on this subject, as intending by the word, “ Satan,” the chief of fallen angels, nor hath this writer yet been able to offer a single proof to the contrary; and, notwithstanding all that he hath written concerning the use of those terms, he studiously avoids saying, that, the word *Satan* is in the New Testament applied to a Heathen god or a dead man; although the whole of his reasoning supposes it, and the

• Luke x. 18.

very

very existence of his scheme depends upon such a fact! Why then should he be so very angry, that, other men will not believe what himself refuseth to assert? And if he will not affirm that the apostles have applied the term *Satan* to a dead man, doth it not clearly follow, that, according to his own judgment, no one can be supported in making any such assertion? The common opinion therefore remains in its full force, that by “Satan,” the head of possessing dæmons, the sacred penmen understood the chief of fallen angels, called also “the devil.”

§ 6. We shall now proceed to examine those remarkable words of the apostle James, together with a late, and, as it should seem, entirely new, explanation of the passage: *Thou believest that there is one God: thou doest well: the dæmons also believe and tremble*<sup>9</sup>. “I do not remember,” says our interpreter, “to have seen it observed by any writer (and therefore I submit the observation entirely to the judgment of others) that this passage is taken from one in the book of Job\*, which we unhappily render, *Dead things are formed from under the waters, and the in-*

<sup>9</sup> James ii. 19.

\* Chap. xxvi. 5.

“ *habitants thereof* ; but which may more pro-  
 “ perly be translated, *The giants tremble under the*  
 “ *waters (or in the abyss) together with their host*  
 “ *or fellow inhabitants.* Job is here celebrating  
 “ the dominion of God over the mansions of  
 “ the dead ; and he affirms, that the *giants*,  
 “ the souls of those mighty men, who were such  
 “ a terror to the old world, and perished by  
 “ the deluge, do now tremble in the infernal  
 “ regions, together with those who were once  
 “ their cotemporaries on earth, or that now  
 “ inhabit the same mansions.—Now the de-  
 “ mons of St. James answer to these departed  
 “ souls in Job, whether you understand  
 “ thereby the ghosts of the wicked in general,  
 “ or those of the antediluvian giants in parti-  
 “ cular.” The sole honour of this inter-  
 pretation will be readily granted to its learned  
 author ; for all we have in view is an enquiry  
 into its truth. The word *Rephaim* is used  
 for giants, men of great stature, and also for  
 lifeless bodies, destitute of motion. In the  
 book of Job it hath been considered as de-  
 noting bodies of all kinds, formed out of the  
 watry chaos ; but in no one instance is it ever  
 applied to what is *not body*. The very pas-  
 sages quoted by this author are directly against

‡ Farm. on Dem. p. 211—217.

him:

him. " Wilt thou shew wonders to the dead ;  
 " Shall the *rephaim*, bodies crumbled into dust,  
 " arise and praise thee?" To " arise" and stand  
 up properly belongs to body. " Other Lords  
 " besides thee have had dominion over us ;—  
 " they are dead, they shall not live ; the  
 " *rephaim*, or dissolved bodies, shall not rise ;  
 " for this end hast thou visited and destroyed  
 " them :." It must be evident to a common  
 reader, that, the word *rephaim*, in the rest of  
 the passages quoted on this occasion, signifies  
 nothing more than dead bodies in the grave.  
 Our next business is with the word *tremble*.  
 " The English translation," says this learned  
 commentator, " renders the same verb, *to*  
 " *fear, to shake, to tremble ;*" and then he men-  
 tions six different passages, by way of evi-  
 dence. We shall not here enter any further  
 into dry and unprofitable disquisitions about  
 words. In no one of those six passages  
 quoted by him does *the same term* occur  
 which is used by Job in the verse before us ;  
 nor is it found in the sense which this  
 gentleman gives to it any where, that we  
 know of, in the Old Testament. The same  
 phrase which is properly expressed in our  
 language by the word *formed*, is made use of

<sup>1</sup> Psalm lxxxviii. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Isa. xxvi. 13, 14.

in the following places: “ God that *formea*  
 “ *thee* ”:” “ Thou *formedst* the earth and the  
 “ world ”:” “ When there were no depths,  
 “ I was *brought forth* ”:” in this very book  
 of Job, “ Wast thou *made* before the hills \* ?”  
 and in this very chapter, “ His hand *hath*  
*formed* the crooked serpent † :” nor does it  
 appear how any other sense can be affixed to  
 it in the passage before us. “ Lifeless bodies  
 “ were brought forth from under the waters,  
 “ with their inhabitants. *Shaul* (or the center  
 “ of the earth) is naked before him: and for  
 “ *Abaddon* (or the subterraneous deep) there  
 “ is no covering. He stretcheth out the  
 “ north over the empty place: he hangeth  
 “ the earth upon nothing ‡ .” Here is an  
 account of the formation of things from a  
 watry chaos; the center of the earth, there-  
 fore, and those places to which no eye can  
 reach, where all bodies seem to be for ever  
 lost, are beautifully represented as without co-  
 vering before God, who made the whole to  
 arise from under the face of the deep. These  
 things are spoken of as among “ the secrets ”  
 “ of ” infinite “ wisdom,” and as expressive of

\* Deut. xxxii. 18.

\* Chap. xv. 7.

† Psal. xc. 2.

† Ibid. xxvi. 13.

‡ Prov. viii. 24, 25.

‡ Ibid. ver. 5—7.

that

that knowledge from which nothing can be concealed: “It is high as heaven, what canst thou do? Deeper than *Shaul*, the centre of the earth, longer than the land, and broader than the sea, what canst thou know?” Job is not speaking in the above passage, concerning the abode of departed ghosts, but of God’s mighty power in bringing forth various kinds of bodies from under the waters, in stretching out the heavens, and in hanging the earth upon nothing; which things were done before man was created, and can have no reference to the giants who perished at the flood.

But this learned commentator will have Job to give us a description of the state of the dead, as an introduction to his account of the formation of the heavens and the earth; and then, to complete the matter, represents him as believing, that, the departed souls of those who were drowned in the days of Noah are still trembling under the waters! Hath any one a right to charge upon Job such ridiculous opinions as these; and must, not only the terms of the sacred writers, but, even the religious characters and tenets of holy men, all yield to modern hypotheses? There is not

<sup>a</sup> Job xi. 6—8.



the least appearance of any allusion to those giants who lived in the old world ; nay, not so much as the term under which they are described by Moses, is to be found in this chapter : for those mentioned by the Jewish lawgiver were not called *Rephaim*, but *Nephelim*, apostates, to denote their departure from the true worship of God. We have nothing to do, either with the sentiments of Jewish Rabbins concerning wicked ghosts, or the dæmons of Josephus. This author frequently puts us in mind of that striking reason which the apostle assigns for rebuking the Cretans, “ that they may be found in the faith, not “ giving heed to *Jewish fables* <sup>b</sup> ;” which, clearly intimates, that such fancies are not to be our rule of interpreting the holy word of God.

The suppositions of Athenagoras and Tertullian are of no weight at all in this matter ; and, as a proper answer to all authorities of this kind, we beg leave to use the words of our author’s own motto, at the beginning of his book ; *Videndum est ut—sobriè sapiamus ex Dei verbo, ne pro veritate aniles fabulas substitua-*  
*mus.* But, for the sake of argument, we will make this passage as favourable as possible to our commentator, and render it in the follow-

<sup>b</sup> Tit. i. 13, 14.

ing manner : “ The deceased giants still trem-  
 “ ble in the state of the dead, together with  
 “ their wicked companions.” Now, can any  
 one make it appear, that James, by this sen-  
 tence, *the demons believe and tremble*, alludes  
 to those giants ? How is it to be proved, that  
 these dæmons, which, as we are often assured,  
 differ nothing at all from lifeless statues,  
 should also be the very same beings with  
 giants, unless we consider those *rephaim*, with  
 our translation, as *dead things* ? But then,  
 where are our departed ghosts ? By what kind  
 of logic will it ever be proved, that the  
*Nephelim*, or apostates before the flood, the  
*Rephaim* mentioned by Job, and those *demons*  
*who believe and tremble*, are all the same  
 beings ? By what argument, or by what  
 authority, can it ever be shewn, that the a-  
 postle, in this passage, understands those  
 wicked apostates who perished with the old  
 world, and for *this reason* borrows his ideas  
 from the words of Job, when even the  
 terms of Job have not the least resem-  
 blance either in sound or meaning to those  
 of Moses, and James himself uses neither  
 the words of Moses, nor of Job, nor of the  
 Septuagint translation of either passage ?  
 The apostles constantly use this version in  
 their references to the Old Testament, and  
 James himself gives us an example in the very  
 next

next sentence, but in this under consideration, the terms and ideas of the apostle answer neither those of Moses, nor Job, nor agree with the Greek translation of those passages.

Would he assume the liberty of affixing to the word “dæmon” a sense so very uncommon, without explaining it? Would he refer to so unlikely a passage, and to so improbable a circumstance, without giving the least notice of such allusion? Are we not told that a conduct of this kind would be *peculiarly heinous* in an instructor of the people? And have we not been properly warned not to cast *so foul a reproach* on the apostles of Christ? Would it be either candid, or even decent, in us, to wrest the words of the sacred penmen from their common use, to forced and improbable notions, so as to give them an absurd meaning, while their language in its natural and obvious sense, conveys distinct and rational ideas, well agreeing with the doctrines which they constantly advance? We ascribe to the apostle thoughts unworthy his character, and never once suggested in his language, nor to be found in the holy scriptures, when we make him thus speak: “The  
“ giants who perished at the flood, believe and  
“ still tremble in the waters under the earth.”  
But if we understand him according to the  
L 2 obvious

obvious sense of his words, in their usual acceptance, his meaning will be free from absurdities, and consistent with all the doctrines of revelation, and the history of the gospel: "Thou believest that there is one  
 " God: thou doest well: even those superior  
 " spirits also, whose condition is hopeless,  
 " believe thus much, and tremble in the expectation of greater punishment."

§ 7. But it is asked, if *dæmons* and their prince, "were in our Saviour's time conceived to be the very same persons as the  
 " devil and his angels, is it not very surprising, that the New Testament in its  
 " original language, should always speak of  
 " the diseased persons under consideration  
 " as possessed by a *demon* or *demons*, and never  
 " by the *devil* or *devils*? A word, as all  
 " must allow, that is never there applied to  
 " evil spirits in the plural number, whatever  
 " its use may be in the singular." We answer, that there is nothing at all surprising in this, unless that such a circumstance should be urged by a person of learning, as an argument against *dæmoniacal* possessions; for it hath very much the appearance of one

<sup>c</sup> *Farm. on Dem.* p. 18, 19.

who makes accuracy of language a reason for rejecting the doctrine which it conveys. The word *devils* in the plural number was never used by the Greeks to denote superior beings of any kind, it is therefore no where thus applied by the apostles, nay, they have employed it in a different sense, agreeably to its common and established meaning, and have been very careful on this subject not to confound their own terms; hence they ascribe possession to *dæmons*, a word, as all must allow, never applied to flesh and blood like ourselves, but generally used by the Greeks to denote beings superior to mankind, for which reason no other term could have been so decisive and proper. We are told, that—"In describing persons possessed, the word *dæmon* occurs above fifty times in the gospels, but the term *devil* not once<sup>4</sup>." To which we shall add the following remark of the same kind, That possessions are ascribed above twenty times to evil and wicked spirits, but never once to *Satan*, their acknowledged head and chief; and, to encrease our author's surprise, there is not the most distant hint ever given concerning the souls of dead men in the whole affair.

The sacred writers assure us, that a great number of evil spirits were concerned in pos-

<sup>4</sup> On Dem. p. 13. Note 1.

sessions ; now, are we to deny the influence of  
 their chief in this matter, because we have  
 not a particular instance given us where himself  
 was the *immediate* agent ? By no means. Our  
 Lord considered the “ casting out dæmons”  
 as the *fall* of Satan’s power, and Peter says,  
 Christ “ went about—healing all that were  
 “ oppressed *by the devil*.\*” If the most express  
 declarations of scripture on this subject are to  
 be rejected, then the question is no longer,  
 what the apostles *have*, but what they *ought*  
*to have written* ? Mr. Farmer thus reasons,  
 “ With respect to the Jews, St. Peter, speak-  
 “ ing in the language of his country, says,  
 “ *Christ healed all that were oppressed of the devil*.  
 “ The apostle seems here to refer to Christ’s  
 “ cure of the diseased in general, without  
 “ taking into consideration the particular case  
 “ of the demoniacs ; who, in the gospels, are  
 “ distinguished from the blind, the lame,  
 “ and those afflicted with other maladies ;  
 “ concerning whom we never read, that de-  
 “ mons entered them.”—True ; is it not then  
 clear, that if dæmons are not said to have en-  
 tered into the blind and lame, and those af-  
 flicted with common maladies, Peter must  
 intend dæmoniacs, when he says Christ  
 “ healed those that were oppressed *by the devil* ?”

\* Acts x. 38.

\* On Dem. p. 74—76.

No! by no means : Have I not said that,  
 “ All the diseased were spoken of by the  
 “ Jews as *oppressed by an evil spirit*, but not as  
 “ *possessed by demons*, of whom there is here no  
 “ mention\*.” And that “ St. Peter speaks in  
 “ the language of his country ?” It doth not  
 signify, in whose language the apostle spake, his  
 words are very plain, and very strong. The  
 question is this, Did he himself believe what  
 he said ? If so, he then acknowledges the  
 power of the devil in *oppressing men* ; if not,  
 Is there not an end of the argument, and of the  
 Gospel too ? Let us read the whole verse :  
 “ How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with  
 “ the Holy Ghost and with power ; who  
 “ went about doing good, and healing all  
 “ that were oppressed by the devil : for God  
 “ was with him.” Does the apostle then  
 only speak the language of his country, when  
 he says, “ God *anointed* Jesus of Nazareth with  
 “ the *Holy Ghost* and with power ?” Will this  
 gentleman say, that Peter did *not really* believe  
 the persons here mentioned to have been  
 oppressed *by the devil* ; Or, that the apostle  
 did *not* by the term *devil* intend an intelligent  
 being superior to the nature of man ? When-  
 ever he comes to those capital points on which  
 the whole of the controversy turns, he always

\* Id. Note x.

puts us off with dark and ambiguous *intimations*, and then censures others for not receiving what himself will not affirm ! He resumes this passage in his Letters to Dr. Worthington<sup>f</sup>, and repeats the things asserted in the “ Essay,” but still cautiously avoids saying, that the chief of fallen angels, or a spirit superior to human nature, was *not here* intended. If this learned author would have us to consider Peter as not really meaning to assert any power of the devil over mankind, let him say so, and let him in this case inform us, how it may be certainly known, that the apostle was serious, when he said “ God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost ;” Or whether the whole verse is to be understood with the same latitude ? He cannot surely look upon himself as having yet offered one single reason, why we should not understand the passage as intending what the words affirm. The inspired writer does here assert, that many of those whom Christ healed were oppressed *by the devil*. Now, are we to deny his influence in the matter of possessions, merely because the apostles have not given us a case wherein himself was the *immediate* agent ? How could they, without confusion, ascribe any one particular instance to *Satan* or *the devil*

<sup>f</sup> Lett. to Worthing. p. 89, 90.

more.



more than another, since he is declared to be the head of possessing dæmons, and their chief in every attack upon mankind? This is absolutely to turn the greatest accuracy of language into an argument against receiving the history of certain facts in its plain and obvious meaning. It must surely be thought an uncommon humour in any one, to assign this among other things, as a reason for refusing a doctrine, that the apostles did not choose to express it in those terms which himself had shewn to be improper. What satisfaction can be given to such persons? For, with them, the most authentic evidences are turned into objections, those things demanded as a proof which could not exist without a gross absurdity, and the plainest declarations of scripture rejected, as not containing the real thoughts and designs of the sacred penmen. Peter, it seems, spake the language of his country, where all diseases were thought to arise from an evil being: Agreeable to which, we are informed, that, "The leprosy  
 " was considered by the Jews as a *divine infliction* \*." "All diseased persons," it is said, "were spoken of by the Jews as oppressed by  
 " an evil spirit:" But no one proof of the fact is even offered, while decisive evidences to

\* On Dem. p. 75.

the contrary are at hand. The apostles were Jews, and yet they no where ascribe ordinary and bodily sickness to the immediate agency of the *devil*, or any other evil spirit, and relate many a cure where they never attributed the disease to *Satan*; but must they be understood as not intending what they affirm, and as really designing what they have neither said nor written?

§. 8. Mr. Farmer, in his "Essay," gives us to understand that, "The sacred writers have not particularly explained the sense in which they use the word demon<sup>e</sup>." And after a few strictures on the general use of the Greek language, and the application of this term in the Septuagint version, he adds, "From these premises we may conclude, that by demons, when used in reference to possessions by the writers of the New Testament, they meant such human spirits as were thought to become demons after death; unless some good reason can be given for their assigning this word a meaning on this subject, quite different from that which the Heathens, the authors of the Septuagint, and they themselves, assign it on other

<sup>e</sup> P. 43. 45, 46.

"occasions."

“ occasions.” He introduces this passage in his letters to Dr. Worthington <sup>b</sup>, and there reasons from it, but, as he rarely quotes even himself without capital variations, we must again state his own words: “ In order to determine who these demons were, it was shewn in the *Essay*, that the ancient Heathens and Jews, and the primitive Christians, did all agree in representing them as no other than human spirits.” From these premises the following conclusion was drawn, “ that the sacred writers, having given us no notice of their using the word in a new or peculiar sense, did certainly employ it in reference to possessions, in the same sense in which all other persons did. To suppose the contrary would be to suppose, that they intended to deceive their readers.” But, good Sir, is there a necessity for us to go quite so fast? Supposing the sacred writers to have used the word “ dæmon,” in a sense very different from many of those called *primitive* Christians, how would it appear that “ they intended to deceive their readers?” Were they answerable for the ideas which men might *afterwards* affix to this term? By no means. You might with equal propriety have carried the argument a little

<sup>b</sup> P. 25, 26.

further, and said, " I myself do affirm, that  
 " the demons mentioned in the New Testa-  
 " ment were nothing more than human spi-  
 " rits : the apostles therefore used it in this  
 " sense ; for to suppose that they did not use  
 " it in the same sense in which *all others* did  
 " would be to suppose, that they intended to  
 " deceive their readers." Now, did *all others*  
 affix one invariable idea to the word " dæ-  
 " mon ;" nay, hath not this gentleman him-  
 self acknowledged the contrary ? Hath he not  
 on this subject, several times excepted against  
 the *speculations* and *opinions* of the Greek philo-  
 sophers in general <sup>1</sup> ? Doth he not call Philo  
 " more properly a Platonist than a Jew <sup>2</sup> ?"  
 Hath he not charged the fathers with an un-  
 due attachment to the principles of the learned  
 Gentiles, and accused them of hypocrisy and  
 interested motives, as containing the true rea-  
 son why so many of them applied the word  
 " dæmon" to fallen angels <sup>1</sup> ? Hath he not told  
 us, that, " Whenever they have an end to  
 " serve, no caution can be too great in fol-  
 " lowing them <sup>2</sup> ;" that no stress is to be  
 laid on their general conduct ; and finally,

<sup>1</sup> On Mir. p. 189, 190. Lett. to Worthing. p. 35.

<sup>2</sup> On Mir. p. 221. Note 1.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. p. 216—227. and Essay on Dem. p. 49—57.

that it is of no importance to determine, whether they were sincere or not in ascribing possessions to fallen angels; Justin Martyr excepted? "None" it seems "could be better qualified" than he "to inform us of the general sense of those ages, concerning the subject under our consideration.—Now this learned writer—says expressly, that *those persons who are seized and thrown down by the souls of the deceased, are such as ALL MEN agree in calling demoniacs and mad*."<sup>m</sup> He had no end to serve, and may be followed without caution; great stress is to be laid on his opinion; there was no doubt of his sincerity. Is it an instance of real candour in any one, to represent ancient writers as fools or learned, as knaves or virtuous persons, just as they oppose or favour his own opinions? Are not these exceptions and heavy charges alledged against those different classes of men, a clear proof, that we have an undoubted right to assert in our turn, that the ancient Greeks, Jews, and primitive Christians, did all agree in ascribing the word "dæmon" to such beings as were thought superior to human spirits? If therefore the sacred writers have no where particularly explained the sense

<sup>m</sup> On Dem. p. 47, 48.

in which they used that term, what right hath this gentleman to affirm, that they intended by it departed souls of our own kind, since it is evident from his own confession, that the most celebrated writers, both among Heathens and Christians, applied the word to spirits of a superior nature? However, notwithstanding our author's assertions, the sacred penmen have explained their ideas under the word "dæmon" with as much care and accuracy as any of the Heathens, Jews, or primitive Christians. The ancient Greeks, as we have seen, used the word for intelligent natures in general, and more especially for beings superior to men; the apostles, therefore, agreeably with this its established and common use, have applied it to such intelligent natures as are superior to mankind. But, as the sacred writers themselves confine this phrase to *evil beings*, unless where they record the expressions or sentiments of other persons, so, on the subject of possession, they constantly apply it to those malignant spirits, the head of which is "Satan," the great enemy of human nature, and very properly define those dæmons of which they speak to be *wicked and unclean spirits*. And as the Heathens neither described their gods, nor their possessing dæmons, under any such terms or ideas, the apostles have  
carefully

carefully distinguished the dæmons of whom they write, from those beings to which the idolatrous Greeks applied this word. The authors of the Septuagint translation used the same terms to express those phrases of the sacred penmen, under which the Heathen gods were described, but, they never once affix to them any such epithet as *wicked* or *unclean*, nor ever speak of the chief of those idolatrous objects as the great enemy of mankind ; the apostles, therefore, on the subject of possession, have also carefully avoided their application of the word *dæmon*, and, when they borrow the language of the Septuagint version concerning the objects of Heathen worship, they as studiously shun the use of those epithets and terms which are applied to possessing dæmons, as the authors of that translation themselves had done before. The writers of the New Testament never give the least intimation, that, by possessing dæmons, they meant either the Heathen gods, or the souls of dead men, on the contrary, they repeatedly assure us, that, they speak of evil beings, which act under “Satan” as their head and chief, who is also called *the Devil*. Our author himself will not say that the term *Satan* is put for a *dead man* : Have we then any right to give the words of the holy apostles an arbitrary meaning, which themselves

themselves have never once suggested? Will a candid man, will a fair disputant, deny, that the sacred writers really meant what they said, and then affirm, that they intended what they have neither written nor intimated? If our author had professed himself an utter enemy to all the different opinions that were ever advanced in the world, either by the Heathen or sacred writers, it would have been a small matter, and excusable, compared with his present undertaking, which is to persuade his readers, that the most respectable characters among the ancients never meant what they affirmed, nor ever believed those doctrines which they have laboured to support in their writings, but, that they are to be understood as *designing* opinions directly contrary to the import of their own language. Is not this such an attack upon the common honesty of mankind, and, at the same time, such a violation of the established and accustomed forms of speech, by which men are used to convey their thoughts to one another, as naturally destroys the faith of all history, while it leads to *universal* scepticism.?

§ 9. But, says this gentleman, “ The  
 “ word *evil* might be applied to a demon,  
 “ on account of the *pain* and *misery* he was  
 “ thought



“ thought to create. And it is possible, that  
 “ demons might be called *unclean*, because  
 “ persons under that melancholy and maniacal  
 “ disorder, of which they were the reputed  
 “ authors, avoided the society of men, and  
 “ were continually defiling themselves with  
 “ objects esteemed by the Jews *unclean*.”  
 Our business is not with what the word, *evil*,  
*might* be applied to, nor yet with what, it is  
*possible, might* be the use of the term *unclean*, but,  
 with the plain and obvious sense of these epi-  
 thets, as *actually* applied by the apostles to the  
 word “ dæmons.” Will our author say, that,  
 the sacred writers, by this term which we  
 render *evil* or *wicked* did *not* intend what is  
 morally evil? Have the apostles any where  
 used it in a *different* sense? Can he point out  
*one* example from the New Testament, in  
 which it signifies only wretchedness or misery,  
 without implying any thing *criminal* or *morally*  
*evil*? None of these things hath he yet done.  
 Suppositions and conjectures concerning what  
*might be* are with him the usual premises  
 from which he draws the most positive in-  
 ferences. But, “ are not demons called deaf  
 “ and dumb spirits? Have spiritual beings  
 “ corporeal organs \*?” We know nothing

\* On Dem. p. 61, 62.

† Ibid. p. 63. Let. to Worthins. p. 79.

concerning the organs of spiritual beings any more than our author. Persons possessed with deaf and dumb spirits were themselves expressly said to be *deaf* and *dumb*, and to be restored to hearing or speech when the dæmons were cast out; there is, therefore, a sufficient reason for applying those terms to the effects produced by such spirits. But, it is never said, that, the possessed with evil or wicked spirits were also themselves *evil* or *wicked*; we have, therefore, no just cause for confining such epithets to the disordered persons themselves. We read of deaf and dumb dæmoniacs, but never of an *evil* or *wicked* dæmoniac, nor yet do we ever meet with an *unclean* dæmoniac in the whole Gospel. Persons are said to be possessed with unclean spirits where no one circumstance of *ritual* uncleanness is even suggested. “There was  
 “a man in their synagogue with an *unclean*  
 “spirit.” These epithets also occur where no particular dæmoniacs are alluded to. “He  
 “called unto him his twelve disciples, and  
 “gave them power over unclean spirits, to  
 “cast them out.” “He cured many of  
 “their infirmities and plagues, and of evil  
 “spirits.” But it is no where written, that, he

<sup>p</sup> Mark i. 23.

<sup>f</sup> Luke vii. 21.

<sup>1</sup> Matth. x. 1.

gave them power over deaf or dumb spirits ; nor is it ever said in a general description, that he cured many of deaf and dumb spirits. This epithet, *evil* or *malignant*, is very often put by way of emphasis for “ the “ devil,” or “ wicked one,” himself, “ Cain “ was of *the wicked one*, and slew his brother ‘ ;” nor is it, to the best of our knowledge, ever applied by any writer to an intelligent agent, *as such*, unless it be in an immoral sense.

§ 10. Here we beg leave to observe, that; our author, on this occasion, contends for an idea which can be of no real importance to his *present* argument, concerning the nature of possessing dæmons ; for, he very often assures us, that, the departed souls of wicked men, in the judgment of the ancients, became *wicked* dæmons. “ Josephus,” he says, “ declares, “ that demoniacs were possessed by the spirits “ of wicked men. By such spirits, demoniacs “ amongst the Heathens (after whom the “ Jews copied) were thought to be possessed ‘.” He acknowledges, therefore, in the most express terms, that possessing demons were considered, both by Heathens and Jews, as being

‘ 1 John iii. 12.      ‘ On Dem. p. 59.

of an *immoral nature*; and yet, in the very next sentence, he opposes this opinion, with respect to the language of the Gospel, and would have us believe, that, the word *evil* was there applied by the apostles to dæmons, only on account of the pain and misery which they were thought to create. Indeed, the whole of his hypothesis concerning dæmons, has a reference to something further than merely the case of dæmoniacs; for, if Peter only spake the language of his country when he said, that, “Christ went about doing good, and “healing all that were *oppressed of the devil*,” without meaning to assert the power of any fallen angel over the bodies of mankind, why could not the language of the apostles be considered in the same light with respect to dæmoniacs? What necessity was there, either for representing *all* the Heathen gods, even their supreme *Numen* among the rest, as dead men; or, for supposing that nothing more was intended by dæmons, in the Gospel, than human spirits; since, even on this contradictory and absurd hypothesis, the sacred penmen are still supposed to speak only the language of their country? The following questions will, perhaps, be asked in the accustomed form and manner: Is it not *possible*, that, both the apostle Peter and the Jews *might* use

use such terms as these, *oppressed of the devil*, without alluding to any fallen angel? Is not this very sentence thus explained in the "Essay," that, "all the diseased were spoken of by the Jews as *oppressed by an evil spirit*?" Now, does Mr. Farmer say, that, *by an evil spirit*, in this case, they intended the chief of fallen angels; or, that, Peter spake the language of his country in this sense of the words? We answer, No: he is very careful not to assert any such thing, and we apprehend he never will, because that would be to defeat his whole scheme. For this reason, the design of what he hath written on dæmons and dæmoniacks appears to be much more extensive than the generality of his readers imagine. He evidently intended something more than a refutation of the vulgar opinion concerning possessions; and, if we had not considered his scheme as directly contrary to all those important doctrines that relate to the very end which is expressly assigned for the appearance of the Son of God in the world, we should not have entered so fully into his arguments with respect to the Heathen gods and the nature of dæmons, nor indeed have concerned ourselves with the subject at all: and that the above is not an erroneous conjecture, will we presume be afterwards clearly shewn. We shall close the present

chapter with observing, that, it is a very gross abuse of language to represent the possessing dæmons, mentioned in the Gospel, as nothing more than the souls of departed men, since the Evangelists have never given the least intimation of any such thing; that, good spirits cannot be supposed under this use of the word, as possessing dæmons are expressly styled wicked and unclean spirits; and, that, the Heathen gods could never be understood by the term, for two reasons, first, because the sacred writers have with one voice proclaimed the utter impotence of those dæmons; and, next, because the inspired penmen only affirm, that, the Gentiles sacrificed to dæmons. It is no where said in the whole Scriptures, that, they sacrificed to evil spirits, or, that, all their gods were wicked and unclean dæmons, no, nor yet, that, any of them were such; although it is well known that some of the Heathens did professedly sacrifice to evil beings. The description, therefore, of the Pagan deities, both in the Old and New Testament, by no means answers to the definition of possessing dæmons in the Gospel,

## C H A P. V.

*The Arguments alleged against the Scripture  
Doctrin concerning Dæmoniacs examined and  
shewn to be inconclusive.*

§ 1. **I**T is a truth acknowledged on all hands, that, the Greeks and Romans entertained very absurd opinions concerning the influence of spirits, and ascribed many disorders to imaginary beings, which could not, in the nature of things, be the true cause <sup>a</sup>. But, in what respect can this be a proof, that, the Evangelists were equally mistaken in their belief of real possessions? Had the ancient Heathens and the sacred writers the same ideas concerning this subject? If that could be proved, then, indeed, an inseperable connexion would be obvious. Will any one affirm, that, the apostles grounded their belief concerning this matter upon the same principles with the Heathen world? Nay, is it not evident, is it not confessed, that, they paid not the least regard to the supposed influence of Jupiter,

<sup>a</sup> Sykes and Lardner.

Ceres, Apollo, or any idol god whatever? Did the Heathens look upon Jupiter, Juno, Neptune, Ceres, as evil, unclean, and wicked, spirits? Have they spoken of their gods as agents under Satan, the great enemy of mankind? Whatever resemblance there might be in appearance between the dæmoniacs of the Gospel, and the “Cerriti” and “Lymphatici” of the Greeks and Romans, yet, both the sentiments and language of the holy Evangelists, concerning the cause of those distempers, were very different from the opinions and expressions of the ancient Heathens. We may, then, fairly dismiss all those arguments which are drawn from the erroneous notions of the Pagan world; they belong not to Christ and his apostles: our business on this subject is only with the real judgment of the sacred penmen, and the ground of their belief. The account which is given of “Saul’s” case must also be set aside, because it is considered as parallel with the ancient “Vates” and “Cerriti.” No proof has yet been offered, that, either the Jews or the inspired writers ever ascribed the disorder of “Saul” to any idol god, we cannot, therefore, without great injustice, involve their descriptions with the errors of the Heathen. But, it is affirmed, that, Saul’s disease was *constantly cured* with soft accents



accents and melodious sounds <sup>b</sup>. What then could be the reason why this distemper, which was so often *cured*, should *as constantly return*? It must have been a very singular case, indeed, in which even repeated *cures* could be of no avail! However, according to the Scriptures, his distemper increased, and, all the melodious charms of David's harp at last became useless; nothing could sooth his breast, or suppress his rage.

§ 2. It must appear obvious to every candid reader, that, the sacred writers never once refer possessions to the Heathen gods, nor even mention their names in connexion with any instance of the kind. We do, therefore, entirely reject, from the present subject, the whole of a certain learned discourse concerning the vanity of the Pagan deities, which begins in the following language of exultation, and continues for above forty pages. “Who-  
 “ ever the Heathen demons or deities were,  
 “ whether *human* or *angelic* spirits, they are  
 “ all, without exception, branded in Scrip-  
 “ ture, as being utterly void of all power to  
 “ do either good or evil to mankind.”—“ So  
 “ very clear and determinate is the language

<sup>b</sup> Sykes and Lard. on Dem.

“ of Scripture on this point, that all the wit,  
 “ and learning, and zeal, of those who contend  
 “ for the reality of the possessions and prodigies ascribed to the Heathen gods, have  
 “ not yet been able to devise any method of  
 “ evading the argument against their power,  
 “ drawn from the Scripture representation of  
 “ them<sup>c</sup>—.” Now, the apostles never represent those dæmons whom our Lord cast out, as utterly void of all power to hurt mankind, nor do they ever speak of them in such language as the prophets have used with respect to idol gods; nay, so little are the Heathen deities concerned in this matter, that, we care not who maintain or who oppose those *possessions* and *prodigies* which have been ascribed to their influence, nor, do we want to evade any evidence, urged either in the Scriptures or other writings, against their power. For the same reason likewise, we pay no regard to all those acute and fine arguments against dæmoniacal possessions, drawn from the common use of the word *dæmon* among the Heathens; they affect not the subject in dispute. The apostles frequently introduced terms borrowed from idolaters, yet, they neither thought nor spake like them. They had

<sup>c</sup> Farmer on Dem. p. 191, 192.

their

their ideas both of God and evil spirits, neither from Pagans nor Jews, but, from the sacred instructions of the Holy Ghost. The word which is every where rendered “God” in the New Testament, was more generally applied to men among the ancient Greeks than the word “dæmon,” nor, is there any term so rarely put for the Supreme Deity and Maker of all things, among the Pagan writers, as that of “God,” yet, he is often styled *the dæmonion*. Now, were we to insist upon it, that, the inspired writers always used the word “God” according to the same sense in which it is generally found among the Heathens, and, urge the consequence exactly in the same manner as hath been done with respect to the phrase *dæmons*, we should not deserve to be reasoned with at all. Some reverence is certainly due, at least from professed Christians, to that divine authority and guidance under which the sacred writers penned their history; and, we think also that a decent respect should be paid, in our reasoning, to the common sense of mankind.

§ 3. We do likewise reject all such inferences as the following, drawn from the above mentioned arguments, as being nothing at all to the purpose; “May we not infer  
 “ that

“ that there is much injustice in reproaching  
 “ the Scriptures with countenancing the doc-  
 “ trine of demoniacal possessions ? Did the  
 “ sacred writers first introduce this doctrine ?  
 “ It is not even pretended that they did.  
 “ Did they ever assert it as a part of that  
 “ revelation which they were divinely com-  
 “ missioned to publish to the world ? They  
 “ could not thus assert it ; for it overturns  
 “ the main doctrine and evidences of the  
 “ Jewish and Christian revelations. On the  
 “ contrary, they have done every thing  
 “ they could fitly do, to banish it out of the  
 “ world, by carefully instructing Christians in  
 “ the absolute nullity of demons”—. “ If you  
 “ regulate your judgment concerning demons  
 “ by that of the writers either of the Old  
 “ or New Testament, you must allow, that  
 “ there never was, nor can be, a real demo-  
 “ niac <sup>d</sup>.” We did not expect, that, our author  
 on this occasion would have been altogether  
 so uncandid, since even his friend “ Lardner” is  
 one among the respectable names who consider  
 the apostles themselves as believing the reality  
 of possessions, and as asserting it too in their  
 writings ; yet “ Dr. Lardner” never thought of

<sup>d</sup> Farm. on Dem. p. 239, 240. also Lett. to Werthin.  
 p. 124, &c.

*reproaching* the Scriptures, and was as far from intending any *injustice* to the sacred penmen, as this writer himself, with all his professed zeal for the reputation of the word of God. It is no more a *reproach* to the Scriptures, that, they assert the doctrine of dæmoniacal possessions, than it is, that, they represent the devil as bringing into the world sin and death, and all the miseries to which human nature is subject; it is to their honour, that, they attribute not such evil works to Almighty God. The doctrines concerning human misery were introduced with those facts to which they relate. They were authorized of God to publish to the world the true cause of all those sufferings, and of that death to which every individual of mankind is born; and they have shewn these things to be the work of the devil. Now if any one should perversely ask, “ Did they ever assert it as a part of that revelation which they were divinely commissioned to teach, that, the devil was the author of sin and death, and that he is still the occasion of evil and misery to the human species?” The proper answer in such a case would be this, “ He that shall deny these things, overturns, as far as lies in his power, the main doctrine and evidences both of the Jewish and Christian revelations, and by thus asking, whether the sacred

“ penmen

“ penmen have really asserted what himself well  
 “ knows they have asserted? can only be un-  
 “ derstood as intimating, that they ought not  
 “ to have advanced, as a part of a divine reve-  
 “ lation, those doctrines which are undoubt-  
 “ edly affirmed in the Scriptures.” If, there-  
 fore, it be thought, that, the inspired writers have  
 either contradicted themselves, or published o-  
 pinions that are inconsistent with the immutable  
 principles of reason, let the supposed evidence  
 of such facts be fairly stated, then a plain  
 and direct answer may be easily given. The  
 apostles have done every thing which they  
 could fitly do, to prove the reality of a de-  
 structive influence from evil spirits over hu-  
 man nature, while, at the same time, they  
 have been very careful to shew the vanity of  
 idol gods, that, men might seek the true God,  
 and Father of Christ, for deliverance and  
 happiness; but, they have not said one word  
 concerning the nullity of wicked dæmons,  
 lest the delusions of the devil should prove  
 fatal to unthinking men, already brought  
 under the power of sin and death by means  
 which God abhors. If we regulate our judg-  
 ment concerning dæmons by the Holy Scrip-  
 tures, we must allow, that, there hath been,  
 and still may be, many a real dæmoniac.

§ 4. We do not affirm, that, possessions were either peculiar to the times of Christ, or to the country of Judea ; neither do we suppose, that, the dæmoniacs mentioned in the Gospel were different from real dæmoniacs in any other part of the world. We are, therefore, not at all concerned in those arguments which are urged against such opinions ; they relate only to particular notions that may have been imprudently connected with the doctrine, but, do not affect the truth of those facts which are the subject of dispute, nor the principles on which the doctrine itself is grounded. We have nothing to do with that *horrid description* which is given by Mr. Farmer of their sentiments, who thought possessions to be more frequent in the times of Christ than either before or afterwards ; it belongs not to us, nor indeed do we think that it can be applied with justice to any of those writers mentioned on the occasion\*. However, we beg leave just to point out one of his arguments on this article, because it suggests a circumstance of some moment : “ The New Testament,” saith he, “ doth not suppose “ a difference between the demoniacs in the “ age of Christ and other dæmoniacs ;

\* On Dem. p. 128—142.

“ much less doth it point out any clear marks  
 “ of distinction between them.”—“ You might  
 “ as reasonably affirm, that, the lame, the  
 “ blind, the deaf, the dumb, or the per-  
 “ sons afflicted with fevers, palsies, and lepro-  
 “ sies, who were cured by Christ, were diffe-  
 “ rent from those labouring under the same bo-  
 “ dily defects or disorders, in other countries,  
 “ and in other ages, as affirm this concern-  
 “ ing dæmoniacs. And thus you would de-  
 “ stroy the evidence of the Gospel arising  
 “ from Christ’s miraculous cures<sup>f</sup>.” The  
 New Testament certainly doth not suppose a  
 difference between the dæmoniacs in the  
 age of Christ and other dæmoniacs, but,  
 we pay no regard to any account of pos-  
 sessions or miraculous cures, that of the holy  
 apostles excepted; because, we have not such  
 authentic evidence in support of other nar-  
 rations of this kind, as we have for the truth  
 of those in the Gospel. Now, if the in-  
 stances of possession recorded by the sacred  
 penmen were not *real*, nor to be considered as  
 such, then neither can we prove that those  
 persons were *really* lame, blind, deaf, dumb,  
 or afflicted with fevers, palsies, and lepro-  
 sies, who are said to be cured by Christ of  
 these disorders. We may as well insist up-

<sup>f</sup> On Dem. p. 147, 148, 149.



on it, that these cases are not to be understood as they are related, as affirm thus much concerning dæmoniacs. The vulgar, whose language it seems the apostles used on this occasion, were often mistaken; nay, physicians themselves frequently err in naming diseases. On this principle of interpreting the words of Scripture, the whole history of our Lord's divine works would fall to the ground, because no confidence could be put in the language of the New Testament; we could not tell, when the apostles spake, what they really meant; and thus you would destroy the evidence of the truth of the gospel arising from Christ's miraculous cures. Nothing, in our opinion, can strike more directly at the authority and credit of the apostolic history, than the method of reasoning made use of on this occasion.

§ 5. But we are informed that, “The  
 “ prophets of God also, as well as the professors  
 “ of science, when they speak upon points of  
 “ philosophy, adopt the common language,  
 “ though grounded upon opinions universally  
 “ allowed to be erroneous. Our Saviour says,  
 “ “ God maketh his sun to *rise*,” and the Psalmist,—“ that the sun *knoweth his going down*”  
 “ —&c<sup>s</sup>.” This gentleman hath repeatedly told us, that dæmoniacal possessions were be-

<sup>s</sup> On Dem. p. 317—325:

lieved by all ranks of people in the times of the apostles, and allowed by *the learned physicians, and the most able philosophers*, and hath also undertaken to prove the fact, with as much diligence and zeal, as if it had been one of the chief objects which he had in view\*; and yet in the very same “Essay” he *now* urges it as an argument against the reality of possessions, “That the language of Christ and his apostles was grounded on opinions *universally allowed to be erroneous.*” It is no easy task to reason with one who so frequently and expressly contradicts his own assertions. However, the belief of possessions was general and popular at the time in which the apostles wrote, as well as for ages both before and after the public ministry of Christ. Nor was this to be considered as the persuasion of the vulgar only, it was the real opinion of the learned in those times. There does not appear to have been any exception among the Jews, unless the Sadducees be considered in that light, who said, “There is no resurrection, nor angel, nor spirit\*”; for which tenets they were universally censured, and in opposition to which, the sacred writers have more than once declared themselves. The language, therefore, of the apostles concerning possessions, was founded on an opinion uni-

\* Ibid. p. 119. 134—142.      \* Acts xxiii. 8.

versally received at that time; none, that believed the existence of superior beings, ever called the truth of the doctrine in question. Hence, then, it certainly follows, that we have no right to suppose that the sacred penmen had any other ideas concerning this subject than their terms and expressions convey. To affirm that they surpassed all their countrymen in natural philosophy and science, and therefore had different notions with respect to this matter, would be contrary to acknowledged facts and their own confession; and to maintain that they had other sentiments communicated to them by revelation, would be absurd, because this never could be known without their own declaration, but they have never intimated any such thing. The whole of the argument, therefore, drawn from the common use of language founded on opinions known to be erroneous, is entirely overthrown, because no error concerning this matter was discovered, or even pretended, in the apostles days. Should we indeed, on hearing a gentleman say, “The sun goes down clear this evening,” insist upon it that he was ignorant of the Newtonian philosophy, it would be uncandid, and even ridiculous, because the diurnal motion of the earth round its own axis, as well as its annual motion round the sun, are now believed even

by common mechanics and labourers; but should we, from this circumstance, take upon us to affirm that the apostles did not mean what they say concerning possessions, it would be little better than an affront to the common sense of mankind, because their language relates to principles, the truth of which was not called in question either by the vulgar or the learned at the time in which they wrote. Dr. Lardner therefore honestly confesses, that the reality of the apostles belief concerning possessions cannot be denied, and also adds, that it needs not to be contested<sup>1</sup>.

§ 6. But it seems, “ You can no more infer the apostles belief of possessions from their saying that some *had demons*, or a *spirit of Apollo*, than you can learn a man’s system of philosophy, from his saying that his friend *hath St. Anthony’s fire*, or from his affirming that the sun *rises* and *sets* every day<sup>2</sup>.” This last affirmation, in some connections, would go a great way in determining a man’s system of natural philosophy. Be that as it may. We never can allow that the sacred penmen *only* mention possessions *occasionally*, as when we say that “ our friend

<sup>1</sup> Lard. *Cate of Dem.* p. 122.

<sup>2</sup> Far. on *Dem.* p. 322, 323.

“ hath

“ hath St. Anthony’s fire, or, that the sun sets  
 “ clear this evening;” for in the first of these  
 cases, we intend no more than to affirm that  
 our friend is in a bad state of health, and to  
 convey some idea of his disorder, without even  
 thinking of an invisible agent, and in the  
 latter, we mean only to describe the appear-  
 ance of the weather, not to give an account  
 of the solar system. But the evangelists speak  
 of possessions, as the very subject which they  
 mean to illustrate, in the most direct and ex-  
 pressive language ; they assert the fact as that  
 point which they had immediately in view.  
 The first time the subject is mentioned it is in-  
 troduced in the following manner : “ And  
 “ in the synagogue there was a man which had  
 “ a spirit of an unclean dæmon, and cried out  
 “ with a loud voice saying, Let us alone,  
 “ what have we to do with thee, thou Je-  
 “ sus of Nazareth ? Art thou come to de-  
 “ stroy us ? I know thee who thou art, the  
 “ holy one of God ! And Jesus rebuked him,  
 “ saying, Hold thy peace, and come out  
 “ of him. And when the dæmon had  
 “ thrown him in the midst, he came out of  
 “ him, and hurt him not. And they were  
 “ all amazed, and spake among themselves,  
 “ saying, What a word is this ? for with  
 “ authority and power he commandeth the

“unclean spirits and they come out<sup>1</sup>.” The sacred penmen, not only in this, but in many other passages, still more directly ascribe sayings to the dæmons, as distinct from the persons possessed: “From many also dæmons came out crying, and saying, Certainly thou art Christ the Son of God. But he rebuking them, suffered them not to say that they knew him to be the Christ<sup>2</sup>.” The evangelist is very careful not to write thus; “That dæmons came out of *many crying*,” “Thou art the Son of God,” for then it would have been entirely the speech of the persons afflicted, but he says, “out of many came *dæmons crying*, ““Thou art the Christ.”” The construction of his language therefore obliges us to refer the speech to the immediate agency of dæmons, and not to the afflicted persons’ own thoughts and reasoning. In another case, it is said, “The dæmons besought him that he would not command them to go out into the deep— but that he would suffer them to enter into an herd of swine: and he suffered them. Then went the dæmons out of the man, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the lake, and were choked<sup>3</sup>.” It is

<sup>1</sup> Luke iv. 33—37. <sup>2</sup> Ibid. 41. <sup>3</sup> Ibid. viii. 31—33.

not possible for any one to use more decisive language on this subject than the inspired writers have done. We have selected the above passages from that evangelist, whose proficiency in human literature is acknowledged, and who was also a physician. He could not think of ascribing to bodily disorders verbal confessions of our Lord's true character, and supplications that they might not be sent into the deep, yet he doth ascribe these things to the dæmons, which he says came out of possessed persons, while he is very careful not to impute such confessions and supplications to the thoughts and intention of the persons themselves who were healed at the time. The apostles expressly wrote on the power of Christ over evil spirits, and they assert that he gave them also power over evil spirits ; we cannot therefore discover their real sentiments concerning this subject, on any other principle than that according to which we understand the opinions of Boyle, Newton, Locke, or any other grave writer, that is, by allowing that their language conveys their real thoughts ; for if it does not, we can assert nothing with respect to the judgment of the evangelists in this matter : it will be just the same to us as if they had not written at all, since there is no circumstance in the his-

tory of those times that will suggest even a probability of their having any other ideas than their expressions convey. If Mr. Farmer had not used language concerning the nature of possessions very different from that employed by the evangelists on the same subject, we could neither have known that his notions of the doctrine were contrary to those expressed in the New Testament, nor yet that he considered the apostles themselves as not believing the truth of dæmoniacal possessions; his particular opinion therefore on this point never can be understood without being refuted, for the very reason on account of which it is understood. The most hopeless dilemma into which any writer can be driven! He can use no means of assuring us that the apostles did not believe the reality of possessions, but such as will *prove* that the apostles *did believe* the reality of possessions; for if we ought to consider his words as a sufficient declaration of his own thoughts concerning this matter, we must also view their words as the only authentic declaration of their thoughts on the subject.

§ 7. “ But,” it seems, “ the doctrine concerning possessions is only a point of natural philosophy, and not a subject of religion; ” so



“ so that it was not the business of our Lord  
 “ and his apostles to correct the language of  
 “ the Jews, with respect to this article, al-  
 “ though erroneous \*.” We think it not  
 worth while to enquire what is here meant  
 by “ natural philosophy,” as distinguished  
 from “ religion,” for the following reason,  
 because the very persons who urge this  
 as an argument, have repeatedly assured us,  
 with such energy as cannot fail of procu-  
 ring attention, that possessing dæmons and  
 the Heathen gods were all the same, and  
 on this supposition ground their denial of  
 dæmoniacal possessions. Now, in order to  
 evade the consequence of the direct and express  
 language of Scripture concerning possessions,  
 we are kindly informed, that this “ is only a  
 “ point of natural philosophy, and not a sub-  
 “ ject of religion,” but we shall soon be cor-  
 rected again, and given to understand, that this  
 doctrine is one of the most capital errors in the  
 Christian church, and the parent of endless  
 superstition. It was certainly the business of  
 Christ and his apostles to teach all those divine  
 truths which belong to the redemption and  
 happiness of mankind, and to deliver men  
 from that ignorance of God, and slavish fear  
 of invisible powers, which prevailed over the

\* Lard. Sykes on Dem. and Farm. p. 358—363.

world. Does not the belief of possessions mingle itself with every part of religion, and affect our judgment concerning the whole scheme of Revelation and Providence? Is it not expressly said, that, “for this purpose the “ Son of God was manifested, that he might “ destroy the works of the devil \*?” Was it not then necessary to guard men against wrong apprehensions of the power of Satan, lest they should hereby mistake the real design of the Gospel? And doth not Christ himself, pointing to the very end for which he was manifested, say, “ If I by the finger of God cast “ out dæmons, NO DOUBT the KING- “ DOM OF GOD is come upon you †?” He could not more directly or effectually give his sanction to the truth of any doctrine, than he here does to that of possessions, as connected with the immediate cause of his own appearance. What must we then think of our Lord’s character as a divine teacher, if, when answering the objections of his bitterest enemies against his own authority and *professed* power over evil spirits, he not only forebore to censure, but expressly confirmed, such an erroneous opinion, by an argument which affects the nature and validity of the whole Gospel?

\* 1 John iii. 8.      † Luke xi. 20.

This thought will not be easily admitted by sober Christians. How often are the language and authority of the prophets brought to prove that the Heathen idols were not inhabited by any invisible beings, who could almost rival the true God? Now if the language of the prophets concerning the vanity of idols ought to be considered as unanswerable, why should not the express assertions of our Lord and the apostles be as decisive concerning the reality of possessions? Was the case of dæmoniacs much more difficult to determine than the other? Had the writers of the Old Testament a more extensive knowledge of the nature and inability of Heathen gods than the Evangelists; Or was a far less measure of the Holy Spirit given to Christ and his apostles than to the prophets, so that sufficient room was left for modern divines to contradict, in religious doctrines, both the sentiments and language of the New Testament?

§ 8. But, says Mr. Farmer, in another place,  
 “ we have already seen that neither Christ nor  
 “ his apostles first introduced into the world  
 “ the doctrine of possessions, or the language  
 “ that expressed it. If they are liable to  
 “ censure, therefore, it is only for not de-  
 “ parting from the accustomed modes of  
 “ speaking

“ speaking on this subject, for not forming a  
 “ new language concerning it. We have  
 “ likewise seen that they never assert the doc-  
 “ trine of possessions, but on the contrary  
 “ entirely subvert it, when they are profes-  
 “ sedly stating those doctrines which they were  
 “ immediately commissioned and instructed to  
 “ teach the world.” Hence our author  
 infers, that they must contradict themselves,  
 if they really meant to countenance the opi-  
 nion on which the common language was  
 grounded. We might here ask the two fol-  
 lowing questions, and urge the consequences:  
 first, Which bears hardest upon the apostles’  
 character, to suppose that they have contra-  
 dicted themselves; or to maintain, that, not-  
 withstanding the language which they used  
 concerning possessions, yet they never believed,  
 that there was a real *dæmoniac*? Next, since  
 our author brings the matter to this issue,  
 that he must either consider the apostles as not  
 meaning what their language affirms, or else  
 as having contradicted themselves, is there  
 not at least, some reason to suspect, that the  
 contradiction is not, in fact, with the sacred  
 penmen, but in his own imagination? That

P On Dem. p. 314. See on the latter paragraph,  
 § 21.

either the doctrine may after all prove true, or else himself may have mistaken them in “ stating those doctrines, which they were “ immediately commissioned and instructed “ to teach the world ?” A modest person will not consider these things as absolutely *impossible*. This gentleman is, without doubt, a great and learned writer, yet, is it a crime to suppose, that the apostles were not his inferiors in point of discernment? However, we at present wave such matters, and beg leave to ask; What are we to understand by this passage, “ If they are liable to censure, it is “ only for not departing from the accustomed “ modes of speaking on this subject ?” Does our author choose to be understood as thinking, that it would have been better, upon the whole, if the inspired writers had expressed themselves otherwise than they have done concerning possessions? We wish that he had explained his mind on this article. Was it not as easy for the writers of the New Testament to have *wholly* departed from the accustomed forms of speech on this subject, as it was for the prophets touching idols, if the Evangelists could have done it with the same consciousness of truth? Now, are they liable to any just censure, for not using a different language? Would it be unfair, to represent this

this gentleman as not only taking upon him to censure the terms of the inspired writers, but also to intimate in what manner they ought to have expressed themselves ; if this would be uncandid, in what light are we to understand his reasoning in the above passage ? Are we to look upon the terms and expressions of the apostles concerning dæmoniacs, both as just and proper, and as denoting what they really meant ? If neither will be admitted, we leave our readers to make their own conclusions ; observing in the mean while, that the sacred penmen did not speak of possessing dæmons in the manner and style either of the Heathens on this subject, or of the Jews in their own times. Since, therefore, the apostles refused both their ideas of dæmons, would they not have departed still further from the received principles and accustomed modes of speech concerning dæmoniacs, if they could have done it with a good conscience ?

§ 9. But, says Mr. Farmer, “ a thousand  
 “ idolatrous and superstitious practices being  
 “ grounded on a belief of the power of dæ-  
 “ mons, the prophets of God under the New  
 “ Testament, as well as those under the Old,  
 “ openly taught what their miracles intimated,  
 “ the utter inability of these spirits to do any  
 “ good

“ good or evil to mankind ?” If our author be serious in these assertions, does he not evidently contradict himself? Has he not been telling us, that if the apostles were liable to censure, it was only for *not departing* from the accustomed modes of speaking on this subject? Now he gives us to understand that they *did depart* from the accustomed forms of speech concerning possessing dæmons, as much as the prophets did from the accustomed language of idolaters concerning the Heathen gods, and that they both *openly* taught the utter inability of these spirits to do any good or evil to mankind; although we shall be afterwards informed that no mention is made of casting out dæmons in the Old Testament. The prophets and apostles both taught the vanity of the Pagan deities, and the folly of their worshippers; but let this gentleman shew us one passage in the whole Bible, where the sacred penmen have mentioned the inability of possessing dæmons to do either good or hurt, and we shall be content. We ask nothing unreasonable, nor, as we imagine, anything difficult to him, who can repeat such assertions as the above with *so much ease*. And accordingly, therefore, he thus proceeds,

2 On Dem. p. 371.

“ The

“ The language employed in Scripture on  
 “ this subject is so very clear and determinate,  
 “ that the argument drawn from it against  
 “ their power cannot possibly be evaded, but  
 “ by saying, that by the Gentile Gods and  
 “ demons, the sacred writers did not mean  
 “ those gods and demons whom the Gentiles  
 “ worshipped, but some other spirits whom  
 “ they did not know, much less acknowledge  
 “ and worship. If such a method of explain-  
 “ ing Scripture be allowed, language can be  
 “ of no use.” Our author is greatly mis-  
 taken concerning this supposed argument;  
 and, to shew him, that it may be easily evaded,  
 without his supposition, we return the fol-  
 lowing brief answer : that by the Gentile gods  
 and dæmons the sacred writers *did undoubtedly*  
 “ mean those gods and dæmons whom the Gen-  
 “ tiles worshipped,” and *not* “ *other spirits,*”  
 whom the Heathens never knew. But how can  
 this be an argument against the reality of posses-  
 sion by evil spirits ; Or how can it operate as  
 a proof that the apostles did not believe the  
 doctrine of possessions ? Did the evangelists  
 ever once intimate, that those spirits, which  
 our Lord cast out, were the Gentile gods and  
 dæmons ? Have the sacred writers ever said



the same things of possessing spirits, which they have affirmed concerning the Heathen gods? If not, with what justice can we represent those dæmons, which our Lord cast out, to be no other than the imaginary objects of Pagan worship? And is it not truly surprising, that our author cannot perceive himself alone, bending under the weight of that very absurdity, which, by a strange delusion, he fancies to be hanging on other men? Is not the language employed in Scripture, on this subject, so very clear and determinate, that even himself cannot possibly evade the argument drawn from it, as a proof that the apostles did believe the reality of possessions, but by saying, that the sacred writers, by dæmons and evil spirits, *did not mean* dæmons and evil spirits, but such things as are well known to be *no spirits*? If such a method of explaining Scripture be allowed, language indeed can be of no use! According to this rule of interpretation, the most explicit declaration from the apostles can answer no end: we see it from the very facts under consideration; whence it truly follows, as this gentleman shrewdly observes, that “there are prejudices “ *too stubborn* to yield to any evidence.”

§ 10. The following are likewise urged as arguments against dæmoniacal possessions. “ There were,” it seems, “ several occasions “ on which it is natural to suppose, some mention of the doctrine of possessions would “ have been made in the Old Testament, if “ it had been revealed to the ancient prophets. On this supposition, who would not “ expect, in the history of their miraculous “ cures, to read of their expelling demons ? “ So likewise, when Moses prescribed the “ means of being purified from the defilement “ of natural disorders, is it not strange, that “ he appointed no method of being cleansed “ from the defilement even of a *diabolical possession* ? ” — “ It is more extraordinary still, that “ the Old Testament prophets, though they “ foretel the peculiar glories of the Messiah,” — “ have taken no notice of ” — “ his ejecting “ demons, and enabling his followers to do the “ same. The proper inference from hence “ seems to be, that what is called the ejection “ of demons is the cure of a natural disorder, “ and is included in Christ’s restoring the diseased to health \*.” It is not every one that could have made out this inference from the above premises ; but it was necessary for our

\* *Farm. on Dem.* p. 175—179.

author's plan, which must not be interrupted by little circumstances of obscurity that may happen to occur in the way of reasoning. Our Lord performed many divine works, which never had been done by any of the servants of God; yet no one, before this gentleman, ever thought of rejecting the reality of a particular miracle, as expressed in the New Testament, because nothing of the same kind was done by the prophets. We cannot, indeed, seriously urge this as an argument on any occasion; for it would be a flat contradiction to the words of Christ: "If I had not done  
 " among them the works which none other  
 " man did, they had not had sin'." "Moses," who "prescribed means of being purified from  
 " the defilement of natural disorders," instituted no rite of purification from madness, the very disease which is said to be cured by the casting out dæmons, and which, as we have been already informed, was attended with almost perpetual uncleanness". Now are we, in the manner of our author, to infer from this circumstance, that there was no such thing in his time? By no means, for he threatens the dis-

<sup>c</sup> John xv. 24.

<sup>n</sup> Above, chap. iv. § 9.

obedient with it<sup>v</sup>. Shall we then conclude, that he thought madness different from “natural disorders” in general? This would terminate in favour of dæmoniacal influence: we cannot allow it. Shall we then dismiss the argument? No; not yet, at least, for we have something more to offer: “The Pagan religion provided many rites of purification, for those who were possessed by dæmons, the gods of that religion. Now, if Moses knew these gods to be the devil and his angels, and that they possessed mankind, would it not have been judged necessary by this prophet, and highly desirable by the Israelites, that some rites of purification should be appointed for those who were inhabited by such impure infernal spirits?” To this we answer: That the religious rites of Pagans were no rule for Moses; that he has nowhere described the Heathen “gods to be the devil and his angels,” the incapacity of the one to possess the bodies of men, is, therefore, no proof of the inability of the other; and that the institutions of Moses arose neither from what himself judged necessary, nor from the desires of the people, but from the authority and revealed will of God alone: we can-

<sup>v</sup> Deut. xxviii. 28.

not, therefore, say, what he would or would not have done, had he known the reality of possessions by evil spirits ; since, as an inspired lawgiver, he could injoin nothing but what God commanded. This gentleman forgets, that Christians are not allowed, on the principles of revelation, to admit those things as arguments, which put the laws of Moses on a level with the institutions of a Lycurgus or Solon : our reverence for the holy Scriptures obliges us to reject such vain suppositions ; not that they would affect our subject, if considered as proper, for conjectures will never be admitted as proofs, but we think ourselves bound to honour every part of the word of God. For the same reason, we cannot doubt the truth of those things which are asserted in the New Testament, although not predicted in the Old. The prophets never foretold, that our Lord would multiply a small quantity of bread in such a manner as to satisfy the hunger of many thousands ; that the winds and seas should obey his word ; or that a great multitude, struck with terror, should fly out of the temple, upon his holding up a small scourge ; which things are acknowledged to be some of the chief glories of the Messiah, and works not inferior to the ejection of daemons. Now, shall we deny

these facts, because they were not foretold ? We cannot make such concessions as these, in favour of an hypothesis founded on a direct contradiction to the language of Scripture, and the express design of our Lord's appearance in the world.

§ 11. "We find not," says a very learned writer, "any instances of possessions by good angels, or other good spirits. Why then should possessions by evil spirits be allowed of ? Can it be reasonable to suppose, that Divine Providence would permit evil spirits to have more power to do evil than others have to do good ?" To this we answer, that "good angels, or other good spirits," cannot "do evil" things, and yet remain good. Possessions have always been considered, not only as a source of misery to the unhappy sufferers, but also as instances of wicked usurpation ; for no being whatever can have a right to abuse the bodily organs of men. Possessions are always spoken of as causes of delusion and error to the mind ; nor indeed can they be looked on in any other light, for truth is never conveyed in this manner. How then is it possible that good angels should be

\* *Hard, Case of Dem.* p. 75.

concerned

concerned in works of such a nature ? Is it not very absurd in men of learning to ask why righteous beings do not act wickedly ; and then to urge this as a reason why evil spirits cannot perform that very wickedness which we deny concerning the good ? But it is asked whether “ Divine Providence would permit “ evil spirits to have more power to do evil “ than others have to do good ? ” We cannot certainly determine what was intended by this question. However, we beg leave to observe, that God will never allow good angels, as such, to act wickedly ; that he has permitted evil spirits, as well as wicked men, to exert their power more than they ought to have done ; that intelligent agents may have a natural power of effecting what they ought never to attempt ; but that neither their privilege nor power of doing good is in the least abridged, by asserting that they cannot do evil, and yet continue to be good ; and that the happy exemption of good spirits from any evil work is no proof that wicked spirits are not capable of that work. But if the design of the above question was to intimate, that men can receive no advantage by means of good angels, and that we ought not therefore to suppose, that evil spirits are on any occasion the instruments of their affliction and distress, we then an-

swer, that the Scriptures frequently represent good angels as assisting good men ; that they are styled in the word of God “ministring  
“ spirits, sent forth to minister for those who  
“ shall be heirs of salvation \*;” and that their power to do good is very great, if we believe the prophets and apostles. It would bear hard indeed upon the character of the sacred writers, to suppose that they were equally mistaken, both concerning good and evil angels ; in this case their representation of Divine Providence must lose its credit.

§ 12. But a great many evils, as we are told, have arisen from this doctrine of possessions ; for thus the matter is represented,  
“ Not to mention here the many other incon-  
“ veniences attending the belief of our being  
“ in the power of any’ superior malevolent  
“ spirits, this belief hath a direct tendency  
“ to subvert the foundation of natural piety,  
“ and to beget idolatry and superstition.  
“ These we are certain were the effects which  
“ this belief produced among the Heathens \*.”  
This method of refutation is so very easy, that we cannot forbear following the example be-

\* Heb. i. 14.

\* *Farm. on Dem.* p. 168—171.



fore us. Not to mention here the many other inconveniences attending the disbelief of superior evil beings, infidelity of this kind "hath  
 " a direct tendency to subvert the foundation of  
 " natural piety, and to beget" in the minds of men a disregard of those punishments which are denounced against vice, and to cherish the most extensive wickedness. " These we are  
 " certain were the effects which this disbelief  
 " produced among the Heathens." Such an argument as the foregoing is not to be answered in this manner ; for, " Endless superstitions hath the doctrine of possessions generated amongst Christians, especially in  
 " the darkest ages of the church. Fascination and witchcraft then made a capital article of religion. According to the account given us by historians, nothing was  
 " to be seen but priests driving out devils  
 " from those who were said to be possessed.  
 " The courts of justice, composed of magistrates, who ought to have had more understanding than the vulgar, were employed  
 " in trying witches and forcerers, who were  
 " found guilty upon the pretended evidence  
 " of the devils." To this paragraph a curious note is added, in which we are favoured with the names of twelve devils, who were witnesses against some unhappy curate

for exercising the black art. It was beneath Mr. Farmer to collect such tales as these for so insignificant a purpose. Doth the abuse of any doctrine overthrow its foundation? Are the advocates of any particular opinion to be charged with all the injurious circumstances that may have accidentally attended it in former times? Surely not. From the manner in which the institution of the Lord's Supper is expressed, men, in the darkeſt ages of the church, inferred that moſt ridiculous of all opinions, the doctrine of tranſubſtantiation. Now there are ſome profeſſed Chriſtians who reject the uſe of this inſtitution, and thereby eſcape thoſe abſurdities which the Papiſts have connected with the words of Chriſt; but does it follow, that theſe are the only religious ſect who have a clear and juſt view of the Lord's Supper; and are Proteſtants to be charged with ignorance and weakneſs, for continuing among them an ordinance with which ignorant perſons may have connected abſurd ideas? Will any conſiderate man ſay, that true Chriſtians are anſwerable for all the ſcenes of horror and bloodſhed, of which the church of Rome is known to have been guilty; Or, muſt we infer from theſe things that the belief of the Chriſtian religion " hath a direct tendency to ſubvert the foundation of natural  
 " piety,

“ piety, and to beget idolatry and superstition,” because the profession of it has been unhappily connected with such evil works? Would it not be disingenuous and uncandid to reason in this manner? And yet the most cruel and horrid transactions that can be picked out from the darkest ages of the church are brought to prove, that the doctrine of possessions “ hath a direct tendency to “ subvert the foundation of natural piety ;” and then we are asked, with an air of seeming contempt, “ Is this a history of creatures who “ boast of being rational?” But let our author answer the question himself, for it belongs not at present to his opponents, who, if they be not his equals, are yet as sincerely employed in promoting the cause of reason and humanity. His application of the most flagrant instances of wickedness that ever disgraced former ages, to the opinions of pious and inoffensive Christians of our own times, hath more the appearance of misrepresentation and abuse than of sober reasoning.

§ 13. Dr. Lardner urges it as an argument against the reality of possessions, that they “ seem to be inconsistent with the goodness of “ God :” But are they so in truth? This is the point to be proved. There is a very great difference

difference between equivocal appearances and authentic evidence. Mr. Farmer presses home this argument, in his usual manner, with equal warmth and strength of language. Let us hear them both. The former thus conveys his mind : “ For let any man think with himself, if it be not a strange and hard case for a man to be put into the power of evil spirits ; or for apostate angels, or other impure and wicked spirits, one or more of them, to be allowed to take possession of him, and to teaze and torment him as they think fit. Is this suited to that state of trial in which we now are ? Can we fairly reconcile this to the wisdom and equity of the divine government ? ” The latter, after observing that, “ the human system is subject to invariable laws, such as none but God can controul,” thus reasons : “ Are we to take it for granted, that God will suffer these laws to be controuled, merely for the sake of subjecting the healths, the understandings, and the lives of mankind, even those of the tenderest age, and of eminent piety, to the caprice and malice of evil spirits ? This is a point not to be admitted without the strongest evidence ; so repugnant doth

\* Lard. Case of Dem. p. 77, 79.

“ it

“ it appear to all our ideas of the equity,  
 “ goodness, and mercy of the gracious pa-  
 “ rent of mankind <sup>b</sup>.” So great is this writ-  
 ter’s zeal in overthrowing supposed errors,  
 that he often seems to trample on truth itself,  
 and to violate those sacred rules which ought  
 to be observed even towards an adversary.  
 We do not believe, that any of those persons  
 who maintain the truth of dæmoniacal pos-  
 sessions as related in the Gospel, ever con-  
 sidered them as inconsistent with those invari-  
 able laws, which respect either the universe in  
 general, or the human system in particular ; far  
 less do they ever suppose, that “ God will suffer  
 “ these laws to be controuled, *merely for the sake*  
 “ of subjecting the health, the understanding,  
 “ and lives of mankind to the caprice and ma-  
 “ lice of evil spirits ;” or that beings of this  
 nature can either “ torment or teaze any one as  
 “ they think fit.” We reflect on such thoughts  
 with horror, and on such insinuations with asto-  
 nishment. Let this argument then be stript  
 of all misrepresentation, or what may be called  
 the licentiousness of reasoning, and it will be  
 found to have just the same force against the  
 equity and goodness of Divine Providence it-  
 self, which it hath against the opinion in dis-  
 pute. For it neither is, nor indeed can be de-

<sup>b</sup> Farm. on Dem. p. 167.

nied, that God has thought proper in his wisdom to suffer great numbers to be afflicted with distraction and madness, who were not the worst of men; now, if this fact can be reconciled with the equity of his government, the means by which it is brought about will be consistent with his goodness. If it should still be objected, that there is a material difference between the effects of those invariable laws, by which the world, and the human system as a part of it, is wisely governed, and the mischievous influence of evil beings, we answer, that the consequence in either case, so far as the goodness of God is concerned, is exactly the same; for we do not call in question the divine goodness, when a righteous and benevolent man is stripped of all that is dear to him in this world, by treachery and violence, or is cruelly murdered, any more than when such a one sustains the heaviest losses by storms and tempests, or is killed with a stroke of lightning, although his wretchedness, or death, in the former case, was brought about by means of great wickedness. Thinking men would laugh at us, should we insist upon it, that we must either deny the power of intelligent beings to injure one another, or else give up our belief of the equity and goodness of

of

of divine providence, and maintain that the world is not governed by invariable laws.

§ 13. Mr. Farmer lays great stress upon what he has advanced in his “Dissertation on “Miracles,” concerning the inability of created spirits to controul the laws of nature. “All “the arguments,” says he, “from reason, “elsewhere urged against any superior created “spirits possessing the power of working mi- “racles, or producing any effect in our sys- “tem, contrary to the general rules by which “it is governed, conclude here. But I shall “only observe, that in every part of the “world that falls under our observation, we “see *a fixed order* of causes and effects, such “as is not disturbed by any invisible be- “ings.” The arguments here mentioned conclude nothing at all against the doctrine of dæmoniacal possessions, because we neither look upon them as “miracles,” nor as “effects con- “trary to *the general rules*, by which our system “is governed.” We are not surely under any obligation to believe those absurdities, which may be requisite to shew the force and propriety of this writer’s arguments. He has no right to *compel* other men to appear

as fools, that himself may have an opportunity of discovering superior wisdom ! However, we shall readily give him a second hearing concerning this particular article, as he looks upon it to be of such importance.

“ The grand principle which runs through  
 “ the whole Jewish dispensation is, that Je-  
 “ hovah is the one true God, that he is sole  
 “ Creator and Sovereign of the world, which  
 “ he governs by fixed and invariable laws,  
 “ and that no superior beings whatever, be-  
 “ sides God, are able to controul those laws,  
 “ or that course and order of events, which he  
 “ established. Accordingly, the Old Testa-  
 “ ment refers to the immediate and miraculous  
 “ agency of God alone, all those effects which  
 “ are contrary to that order. The Christian  
 “ dispensation proceeds upon the same prin-  
 “ ciple<sup>d</sup>.” To this we return the following  
 brief answer : That the sovereignty of God  
 over the world is as much, and as justly, as-  
 serted by those who believe the reality of  
 possessions, as by those who deny it ; that God  
 at no time ever controuled those laws which  
 are fixed and *invariable* ; that the Divine Be-  
 ing, as we apprehend, never did in any one  
 instance act contrary to that course and or-

<sup>d</sup> On Dem. p. 183.



der of events which himself hath established; that neither the Old nor the New Testament ever ascribes works of this nature to the agency of God; and that the reason of mankind cannot but censure such ideas, and such expressions, when applied to the blessed deity!"

§. 14. "A miracle," says an eminent philosopher, Mr. Hume, "may be accurately defined *a transgression of a law of nature by a particular volition of the Deity, or by the interposal of some invisible agent.*—The raising of a house or ship into the air is a visible miracle." From this definition he attempts to shew the utter impossibility of all miracles, since God can never be a transgressor of his own perfect laws. Our Divine adopts the same style, and says: "There is a real transgression of these several laws of matter and motion, when a stone is raised up in the air, or supported on the surface of the water, without the application of any corporeal force; or when a disease is cured, without the assistance of the springs and powers belonging to the human frame, or the application of any suitable medicine." He then goes on to shew, that since all miracles are contradictions

\* Essay on Mir.

† *Farm. on Mir.* p. 8, 9.

to the laws and order established in the different parts of the creation, there can be no proper evidence of the truth of any miracles, but of such as are wrought by God himself, and thence he infers the impossibility of all dæmoniacal possessions, since if we allow their reality, we must acknowledge them to be so many miraculous events \*. This is a very concise method of reasoning. Miracles shall be just what the author is pleased to define them, and those things shall be miracles which he thinks fit to call so, then the doctrines which he wishes to establish will naturally follow from his own definitions, and these must be received as authentic, not wanting any evidence in their support! But different writers will, as we see, on this modern plan of reasoning, draw contrary inferences from the same premises: as for instance, “ Miracles are *real transgressions* of the laws “ of nature;” this Mr. Hume urges as a proof that God never wrought one; this Mr. Farmer alledges as a clear evidence, that God *only* can perform a miracle: for the Deity, according to our Divine, has not only controuled those laws which himself ordained to be *invariable*, but also acted contrary to that

\* On Dem. p. 166, 184.

course and order of events which himself hath established. The Holy Scriptures no where define a miracle. They indeed call by this name such effects, as it is evident from the narration, never could have happened without the interposition of an intelligent nature superior to our own, and some of which never could have come to pass without the immediate agency of God himself, but they never intimate that such effects are either contrary to the established laws of nature, or even attended with a suspension of their influence, far less do they ever apply to any of the works of God, such harsh and unbecoming expressions as these, *a real transgression* of the laws of matter and motion, *a repugnancy to the settled laws and course of nature*, *a contrariety to the order* of causes and effects which himself hath established; we are therefore under no obligation whatever to receive such arbitrary and absurd definitions as the above. And notwithstanding Mr. Farmer is so very positive and frequent in the use of this disagreeable language, yet we scruple not to ask, What laws of matter or motion were *transgressed*, when the prophet's axe was raised to the surface of Jordan? Can it be proved that this was done without the application of corporeal force; and supposing that it was so

P 2
done,

done, yet may not the resistance of any particular body be overcome by an immaterial power, without altering any of the laws which relate to the matter or qualities of that body? Is it by the application of corporeal force *alone* that a gentleman puts his hand to his head? Is it not as easy for God, by a mere volition, on any extraordinary occasion, to cause one part of matter to move another agreeably with the laws of nature, as it is for us to put a bowl into motion, or to push a ball with a stick in our hands? And *why* is it repugnant to the general rules by which the natural world is governed, for any superior created agent to overcome the resistance of particular bodies<sup>a</sup>? Has it ever yet been shewn, that there are no superior created beings, whose natural powers extend either to the human system, or to any part of our earth? Bare assertions will not be sufficient on subjects of this kind. And besides, the laws of nature must be thoroughly understood, clearly defined, and their extent accurately marked out, before we can prove to any one what would or would not be contrary to their influence, or inconsistent with their operation, or a *transgression* of their authority. If we really mean

<sup>a</sup> Farm. on Mir. p. 9. Note.

to persuade the world, that miracles are those effects which God produces contrary to that course and order of events which himself hath established, it will be suspected, that we intend either to destroy the very opinion of their existence, or else to overthrow men's faith in the wisdom and stability of Divine Providence.

§ 15. But we cannot deviate now into enquiries of this kind; for although a proper respect to our author's argument hath led us into the above remarks, yet it must appear obvious, that our present subject does not require a discussion of such articles; since it is abundantly evident, that those cases which are called dæmoniackal possessions, whatever be the cause of them, are not at all inconsistent with those general principles by which God rules the world, otherwise they never could have happened; neither do we look upon them to be miracles. Evil spirits are said to have entered into many, and to have afflicted them greatly, but these events are never ascribed by any sacred writer to a miraculous influence; it is only the casting out dæmons which is considered in this light. We are under no obligation to remove the mistaken difficulties, or perverse inferences of other

men<sup>1</sup>, nor to answer those objections which may attend an opinion that is not our own. The writer, last mentioned, is very fond of representing his opponents, as actually believing all the absurdities which himself is pleased to charge upon their avowed sentiments; as if he meant either to draw them into a defence, or perplex them with the appearance of notions which they never held. To the many examples of this nature already given, we must add the following, which is the remaining part of the argument quoted above in the thirteenth section; “ The  
 “ Christian dispensation proceeds upon the  
 “ same principle; and farther teaches, that  
 “ as there is but one God, so there is but one  
 “ mediator between God and man, to whom  
 “ any power or authority over mankind is  
 “ delegated, and who, indeed, hath all power,  
 “ both in heaven and earth, given unto him.  
 “ Now, if there be no sovereign of nature  
 “ but God, and no mediator between God  
 “ and man but Christ; there can be no other  
 “ superior intelligences, who have any power  
 “ over the laws of nature, or over the human  
 “ system in particular.” That there is but  
 “ one God, and one mediator between God and

<sup>1</sup> Farm. Lett. to Worthing. p. 229.

“ men,” are truths never once called in question by those who believe the reality of possessions, nor do they suppose that any power or authority over mankind was ever *delegated* to the devil and his angels. God never gave Satan any authority to introduce sin and death into the world ; but will this be allowed as a clear evidence, that these greatest of all evils are not justly imputed to the influence and malice of the devil ? No power was ever delegated to Cain over his brother’s life, but would this be admitted as a proof, that Abel was not murdered by him ? And besides, who represents created intelligences as having a power over the laws of nature ; or, who denies God to be the sovereign of the world ? But, doth it hence follow, that evil spirits have no influence over the human system ? We might as well assert, that men have no power to oppress and destroy one another, because they cannot controul the laws of nature, or, that there never was a tyrant on the earth, because God is sovereign of the world.

§ 16. The following remarks of the same writer are too singular to be omitted. “ I shall only observe here, that the very  
“ miracles performed upon those who were

“ called dæmoniacs, serve to shew that they  
 “ were not really possessed <sup>k</sup> ;” the meaning  
 of which, put into plainer language, is this :  
 that the very miracles performed on those  
 from whom our Lord, according to the  
 apostles, cast out dæmons, serve to shew that  
 no dæmons were really cast out ; for the proof  
 of which he thus reasons. “ Those, indeed,  
 “ who assert, that there were real demoniacs  
 “ in the age of Christ, triumph in the mira-  
 “ cles performed upon them, as highly use-  
 “ ful to demonstrate the inferiority of evil  
 “ demons to that beneficent power which  
 “ rules the universe, and their subjection to  
 “ the Son of God. But the Gentiles them-  
 “ selves never considered demons as rivals of  
 “ the Supreme Divinity, but rather sup-  
 “ posed they derived their power and autho-  
 “ rity from the celestial gods, and acted in  
 “ subserviency to their designs.” We cannot  
 but stop a little to express our very great  
 admiration. Did the Gentiles, then, acknow-  
 ledge the Supreme Divinity ? Were their ce-  
 lestial gods distinguished from their dæmons ?  
 Did the latter act in subserviency to the de-  
 signs of the former ? And did the Pagans  
*really* confess intelligent natures superior to

<sup>k</sup> Farm. on Dem. p. 185—189.



men, but inferior to the Supreme Divinity ; Or, rather, is not the whole of this passage surreptitious ? Is it possible, that these things should be asserted by him, who hath written so much to prove, that *the supreme Deity* of the Heathens had once been a man, and that *all their gods* were the souls of departed men ? and who also, on this very principle, hath grounded his hypothesis, in opposition to the received doctrine, concerning the nature of dæmons ? If we allow the passage to be genuine, no regard can be due to the author's arguments. But perhaps some of our readers will be yet more surpris'd ; for he thus proceeds : “ From the evangelic history itself, “ it appears, that the Jews thought Beelzebub able to controul all other demons as “ his subjects, and to expel them from the “ bodies of men. What good end then could “ be answered by proving, what Gentiles and “ Jews were ready to acknowledge, that demons were inferior to the supreme Numen ; “ and that Christ had equal power with Beelzebub ? Can we disparage that great miracle, “ the cure of demoniacs, in a more effectual “ manner, than by representing it as wrought “ with such intentions as these ?” No, verily ! Nor can this writer more effectually disparage his own character, as a man, than by giving such

such unjust representations as the above, of their intentions, who have shewn the subjection of dæmons to the Son of God. Was it their design to prove “ that Christ had *equal* “ *power* with Beelzebub ? ” What then was their intention, who said, “ Lord, even the dæmons are subject to us, through thy name ; ” and what did he mean who answered, “ I beheld Satan fall, as lightning from heaven \* ? ” Was it to shew, as is here scornfully intimated, “ what both Jews and Gentiles were “ ready to acknowledge, that he had *equal* “ power with Beelzebub ? ” However, we are not yet ashamed to repeat, in the words of our Lord himself, *the good end* which was answered by the ejection of dæmons ; “ If I “ with the finger of God cast out dæmons, “ no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you † . ”

§ 17. But, according to this Author, we are under a delusion, since the fact here alledged is only a pretence, and can never be an evidence of the kingdom of God ; for thus he speaks, “ The cure of demoniacs seems to “ me to contain in its own nature, a proof “ peculiar to itself of the absolute nullity of “ demons, and thereby a confutation of the

\* Luke x. 17, 18. † Ibid. xi. 20.

“ doctrine

“ doctrine of possessions <sup>1</sup>.” What can be done with those persons who are resolved, whenever they please, to consider the strongest assertions of any fact to be the same thing with denying it? Our present design is only to shew, that the argument here laid down is not sufficient to support this peculiar opinion. “ If,” says he, “ demons possess mankind, “ they must do it either by their own *natural* “ power, or by a power *supernatural* and *miraculous*, occasionally imparted to them by “ God for that purpose.” The supposition of a miraculous power, in this matter, is out of the question; concerning the other he thus proceeds. “ Now, if demons have a natural “ power of entering the bodies of mankind, “ why did they not return to those bodies “ from which they were ejected? Was a “ return to them more difficult than their “ entrance into them at first? If you affirm, “ that they were *perpetually restrained by* “ *God* from exercising their natural power of “ re-entering the bodies from which they had “ been expelled; you affirm more than you “ can support by any positive proof, and “ what is in itself very improbable; for demons cannot be restrained from using their

<sup>1</sup> On Dem. p. 187, 188.

“ natural

“ natural powers without a *miracle*, a *perpetual* “ *miracle*.” It always gives us pleasure when we can use this writer’s own method of reasoning, because we are then not so likely to give offence, we, therefore, chearfully return the following answer in his own way. If you affirm that dæmons cannot be restrained from using their natural powers, without a *miracle*, a *perpetual miracle*, you affirm more than you can support by any *positive* proof, and what is in itself very improbable; for if God can by no means restrain some of his creatures from doing mischief to others, without a miracle, we can have but a small degree of rational and well grounded hope in his power and protection, not having any warrant, either from reason or revelation, to expect such an interposition for our defence, as amounts to an alteration of the laws of nature. Is it credible, that God should allow even to men, as the instruments of his providence, an ability of restraining the natural powers of the most wicked and abandoned among them, from doing further mischief, without a miracle, and yet, that this privilege of securing advantages to his creatures should be denied, not only to the superior ministers of his government, but also to himself, the Maker and righteous Sovereign of the universe? You first

first lay down one absurdity, and then you infer another from it: dæmons, it seems, could not be restrained from returning to those bodies out of which they had been cast, without a perpetual miracle, but the cure of those dæmoniacs mentioned in the Gospel was lasting; hence it is inferred, that those persons never were really possessed with dæmons: and thus it is made evident, that the cure of dæmoniacs “ contains in its  
 “ own nature a proof PECULIAR to itself  
 “ of the absolute *nullity* of dæmons, and  
 “ thereby a *confutation* of the doctrine of pos-  
 “ sessions.” We do confess, that one of the most peculiar assertions that was ever made is here supported by as peculiar an argument as was ever offered, at least by a christian divine, namely, the inability of God to restrain wicked beings, without a perpetual miracle, from doing mischief to those who rely on his protection! We hope never to entertain such ideas of the divine power and goodness. Surely this writer could not suppose, that any one would be induced to give up the express testimony of Scripture, on account of such arguments as these!

§ 18. Express testimony of Scripture!  
 “ Those, indeed, who build their faith in  
 7 “ *possessions*

“ *possessions* upon the supposed testimony of  
 “ revelation, must allow, that *dispossessions* can  
 “ have no other support <sup>m</sup>.” We beg pardon  
 for our ignorance, not knowing that among  
 professed Christians, any better support was  
 wanted. But you should have further con-  
 sidered, “ that by resting the reality of dis-  
 “ possessions on Revelation, you make it  
 “ merely an object of *faith*, not of *sense*;  
 “ and consequently the ejection of demons  
 “ could not, in this case, furnish a *sensible*  
 “ and *public* proof of Christ’s power over  
 “ them, nor indeed furnish any proof of it  
 “ at all to unbelievers. For the proof would  
 “ not arise from the miracle, but from the  
 “ declaration of Christ concerning it; and  
 “ consequently the miracle would *pre-suppose*  
 “ faith, instead of *begetting* it, and be use-  
 “ less to those for whose conviction it was  
 “ designed. Equally useless would it also be  
 “ even to believers: for what evidence can  
 “ arise from the miracle itself, when the very  
 “ reality of it is known only by the testimony  
 “ of the performer? To propose *invisible*  
 “ miracles as means of conviction, is not to  
 “ enlighten, but to insult our understanding.”  
 To these friendly hints is added an encomium  
 on some queries put by *unbelievers*, together

<sup>m</sup> Farm. on Dem. p. 392. Note \*.

with a charge of gross misrepresentations of genuine christianity *by christians*. For what end, or for whose advantage, the above paragraph was written, we presume not to say. But we may be allowed to ask the following questions: can this gentleman produce one instance of a miraculous cure, properly authenticated, any other way, than by the *testimony of revelation*? What *sensible* proofs can we have of Christ's power over diseases, which we have not of his power over dæmons? Can the reality of those miraculous cures which are related in the Gospel, be better known, at this day, without the testimony of the performers, than the casting out of dæmons? "I will," said Christ to the leper, "be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed \*." To one who cried out, "I know thee, who thou art," he said, "Hold thy peace, and come out of him:" and it is added, "when the unclean spirit had torn him, and cried with a loud voice, he came out of him†." Now, by what means can we prove, that the reality of casting out the evil spirit depends more upon the testimony of the performer, than the cleansing the leper? Have we any evidence, that the one was really a leper more than we have, that the other was really a dæmoniac?

\* Matt. viii. 3.    † Mark i. 23—26.

Will it be said, that the enemies of our Lord saw and acknowledged his miraculous cures? It is also affirmed in the Scriptures, that the enemies of Christ were witnesses to his casting out dæmons, and *acknowledged the fact*. Will it be said, that they were not competent judges of such facts, being themselves under the previous influence of an error, concerning this matter? Then it is clear, that we can proceed no further, without entering upon a regular defence of Christianity, because this argument affects the validity of the whole history of the Gospel, as much as it can do the doctrine of possessions. We did not expect to see this old objection of the Deists against the sufficiency of Scripture testimony, and traditional revelation in general, so often and so fully answered long ago, applied by our Author to any particular fact mentioned in the Gospel. The accusation which he brings against Christians, and the unmerited praise, which he bestows on unbelievers, have the appearance of a real insult, offered to those persons, whose sentiments deserved a fairer and more candid representation than he has any where given.

§ 19. But this writer will persist and say,  
 “ You may know when a disease is cured, or  
 “ a dead



“ a dead man restored to life ; but what evidence is there, that a demon is expelled, arising from the work itself ? We find that those who undertook this work, thought it necessary to offer some external proof of the success of their enterprize.” And then he quotes the conduct of “ the Jewish exorcist mentioned by Josephus,” and of “ Apollonius Tyanæus,” who is said to have “ made the demon, whom he cast out, *throw down a statue,*” as an evidence that a spirit was really ejected. “ But,” says he, “ we find nothing similar to this in the conduct of Christ : a plain proof, that by the dispossession of demons he meant nothing more than (what was obvious to all) the cure of a disease <sup>a</sup>.”

*No commentator can more sily pass  
O'er a learn'd unintelligible place ;  
Or, in quotation, shrewd divines leave out  
Those words, that would against them clear  
the doubt.*

We can by no means look upon our author as serious on this occasion ; because it is scarcely possible, that he should have been ignorant of the light in which the entrance of the dæmons into the herd of swine

<sup>a</sup> Farm. on Dem. p. 391, 392.

hath been considered by all christian writers, on that circumstance, who believed the doctrine of possessions. That transaction hath been constantly viewed, as a public and decisive evidence of the reality of possessions, and of the pernicious influence of evil spirits; as a proof how great their power is, and how terrible the effects of their malice would be, if not restrained, and also as a specimen of our Lord's final victory over Satan, which is the great end of his appearance and kingdom. The learned Dr. Doddridge, in his "Family Expositor," a work Mr. Farmer often quotes on this very subject, whenever it suits his purpose, has the following judicious remark. After observing that Christ suffered the dæmons to enter into the herd, "chiefly to prove the reality of a diabolical agency in these cases," he adds in a note, "No miracles are more *suspicious* than pretended *dispossessions*, as there is so much room for collusion in them; but it was self-evident, that *a herd of swine* could not be *confederates* in any fraud: *Their death*, therefore, in this instructive and convincing circumstance, was ten thousand times a greater blessing to mankind, than if they had been slain for food, as was intended \*."

\* V. i. Sect. 70.

No evidence more clear and infallible ever was, or could be given, in the nature of things, of the truth and certainty of any one miraculous cure, or the resurrection of a dead man to life, than that which was publicly afforded, concerning the reality of dæmoniacal influence, and the release of an unhappy sufferer from the power of evil spirits. Could any circumstance be devised more immediately calculated to prove the expulsion of dæmons, and to promote a belief of the fact, than the recovery of this dæmoniac and the destruction of the swine, as described by three Evangelists? In short, there is no possible method of evading the truth of the doctrine, unless either by a direct denial of the fact, as related in the Gospel, or else, by what amounts to the same thing, such solutions of it, as can neither be reconciled with the nature and use of language, nor with the character of Christ, as a divine and public teacher, nor the perfections of God, as a moral governor. Dr. Lardner says, that our Lord, to humour the frenzy of the two madmen, suffered them to drive the swine down a precipice, before they were restored to their right mind. This, not to mention other absurdities, is asserting an impossibility, as well as contradicting the express terms of the sacred penmen. Mr. Far-

mer ascribes the madness and destruction of the herd, to the *immediate* and *miraculous* agency of God himself. For what end? It could be no proof of the dæmoniac's recovery: it could be no punishment for the neglect of a divine precept, because none was violated either by keeping or selling swine; nor does it appear that the owners were Jews. But this solution, like the foregoing, is a flat contradiction to the sacred historians, as well as dishonourable to God, on *such an occasion*. We cannot avoid the plain and obvious design of the history, without giving up the competency of the Evangelists, in this particular, as authentic witnesses: which, indeed, Mr. Farmer seems willing to do, rather than not carry his point!

§ 20. Dr. Worthington had pleaded, that *facts may stand upon the evidence of a divine testimony, if they are recorded by inspired and infallible writers*. Our author's answer to this is too remarkable to be omitted. "By  
 " having recourse," says he, "to supernatural inspiration, you give up the natural  
 " qualifications of the witnesses. For what  
 " occasion could there be for a miracle to re-  
 " veal to them facts, of which, without that  
 " miracle, they were capable and competent  
 " judges?"

“ judges? Either the one or the other of  
 “ these points must be given up. But, I  
 “ apprehend, neither can be maintained.  
 “ Accordingly, I proceed to shew, that the  
 “ reality of possessions and dispossessions,  
 “ neither was, nor could fitly be, established  
 “ by the authority of Christ and his apostles,  
 “ considered as inspired and infallible per-  
 “ sons <sup>1</sup>.” This paragraph, so far as dæmo-  
 niacs are concerned, boldly asserts, that “ the  
 “ reality of—dispossessions *could not fitly* be esta-  
 “ blished even by the authority of Christ and  
 “ his apostles;” and, that neither “ the natural  
 “ qualifications of the witnesses,” nor “ their  
 “ supernatural inspiration,” can be maintained  
 on the present subject. Here is an end of rea-  
 soning; for the testimony of the evangelists,  
 concerning the facts in dispute, is not denied,  
 but the competency of the witnesses is re-  
 jected: we cannot, therefore, proceed any  
 further, without entering upon a formal de-  
 fence of the Gospel history, and shewing its  
 truth from the decisive qualifications of the  
 witnesses. But, our present business is an en-  
 quiry into the Scripture doctrine concerning  
 the influence of evil spirits. However, one  
 short remark, on this occasion, will not be im-

<sup>1</sup> Lett. to Worthing. p. 123.

proper, as perhaps it may be needful, in order to caution serious and well-meaning persons against receiving opinions, the pernicious tendency of which may not have been at first observed.

Notwithstanding the foregoing paragraph of Mr. Farmer, it is every where declared throughout the whole New Testament, "That  
 " the competency of the apostles and evangelists, *as witnesses of those facts*, which they  
 " have recorded in the Gospel, did both in  
 " their own, and in the judgment of their  
 " Lord, arise from *supernatural* instruction and  
 " assistance." Quotations on this article would be endless, we shall therefore content ourselves with two, which we apprehend are sufficient to decide the matter. "The Comforter, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father  
 " will send in my name, he shall teach you  
 " all things, and bring all things to your  
 " remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto  
 " you." "Ye are witnesses of these things :  
 " And behold I send the promise of my father upon you : but tarry ye in the city of  
 " Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power  
 " from on high." For "ye shall receive power  
 " after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you;  
 " and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Je-

' John xiv. 26.

" rusalem,

“Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria,  
 “and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”  
 Sober Christians will hardly say that the  
 apostles, *as witnesses of the facts* which they  
 have recorded, received that divine assistance,  
 for which there was *no occasion*, and *without*  
*which*, they were capable and competent  
 judges. In another place of that same “Letter  
 “to Dr. Worthington,” Mr. Farmer thus ex-  
 presses himself: “It is absurd to suppose, that  
 “the evangelists gave their testimony either  
 “to possessions or dispossessions, in the sense  
 “in which you explain them. They tell us,  
 “that they testified only such things as they  
 “had *heard* and *seen*. You, on the contrary,  
 “make them testify what they neither saw  
 “nor heard.” In order to add the greater  
 weight to this *particular* clause, “They tell  
 “us, that they testified only such things as  
 “they had *heard* and *seen*,” he refers us to  
 an interesting passage of Scripture\*. Our au-  
 thor’s terms in the foregoing clause are suffi-  
 ciently offensive, but his reference indicates a  
 want of candour. We pass by the gross  
 abuse of words, and shall content ourselves  
 at present with observing, “That none of the

\* Luke xxiv. 48, 49. Acts i. 8.

† p. 122.

‡ 1 John i. 1 and 3:

“ sacred writers have ever told us, that they  
 “ testified *only* such things as they had *heard*  
 “ and *seen*; and that the passage to which  
 “ our author refers in the foregoing clause,  
 “ directly contradicts his assertion.” If this  
 gentleman considers the evangelists as “ testi-  
 “ fying *only* such things as they had *heard* and  
 “ *seen*” in the common acceptance of these  
 terms, and really looks upon the Gospel  
 history to have been written *without any super-*  
*natural inspiration* and assistance, let him say  
 so in open and ingenuous language, and not  
 throw out such hints as these, which can  
 only serve to embarrass the subject, and mis-  
 lead the reader, while they add no real weight  
 to the arguments which he means to urge.  
 The stream of life hurries on the bulk of  
 mankind too fast for minute observations on  
 what they read. This may sometimes be fa-  
 vourable to the end proposed by ambiguous  
 insinuations; and it may perhaps afterwards  
 become as unfavourable to the character of a  
 writer, who happens to throw out *doubtful*  
 ideas in a *suspicious* manner. However, the  
 evangelists affirm, that a dæmoniac supplicated  
 Christ, in the name of a multitude of in-  
 visible beings, that they might be suffered  
 to go away into an herd of swine feeding at a  
 distance; that our Lord gave them leave;

and,



and, that immediately the man was not only delivered from his sufferings, but the whole herd, two thousand in number, running violently down a steep place into the sea were choked. Now, supposing that in this case they "testified only what they heard and saw," how could either themselves or the rest of the spectators avoid believing the reality of dispossessions; or, how can we admit the story as related by the sacred penmen without acknowledging a dæmoniacal influence? As Christians we must look upon them to have been faithful in their narrations. If we say, that these facts were not *as recorded by the evangelists*, we not only reject their competency *as witnesses*, but we also deny the truth of their history. To alter their terms in explaining these facts, and to introduce causes and agents different from those which they have mentioned, is in truth to tell the world, that the sacred penmen were in an error, and that they ought not to have expressed themselves as they have done on this occasion\*.

§ 21. But our author proceeds, "There is no sort of evidence from the New Testa-

\* See § 8.

“ ment, that demoniacal possession, considered  
 “ as the cause of insanity, was made the sub-  
 “ ject matter of revelation. It is never taught  
 “ as a doctrine; never asserted either by  
 “ Christ or his apostles, when they were open-  
 “ ing the contents of their commission, though  
 “ they most faithfully revealed the whole  
 “ counsel of God. Indeed it is a subject ne-  
 “ ver professedly treated of; scarce ever in-  
 “ cidentally mentioned, but in relating the  
 “ disorder and cure of demoniacs\*.” These  
 things from other men would have filled us  
 with surprise, but nothing from this gentle-  
 man will ever produce any such effect. The  
 above assertions were occasioned by a remark  
 of Dr. Worthington’s, which we scruple not  
 to repeat: “ That matters of doctrine are de-  
 “ livered in the Gospel as doctrine—and that  
 “ matters of fact are all alike reported as  
 “ facts which really happened; and are ge-  
 “ nerally received as such.” But, says Mr.  
 Farmer, “ Where is the doctrine of possessions  
 “ so delivered?” Possessions and dispos-  
 sessions are spoken of as facts, just as we  
 are informed that Christ opened the eyes of  
 the blind. But would it not be ridiculous  
 for any one to ask, “ Where is the doctrine

\* Let. to Worthing. p. 124, 125.    † Ibid. Note.

“ of blindness delivered ?” We cannot tell how to reconcile the foregoing paragraph with a candid and ingenuous mind ; for dæmoniacal possessions, and the ejection of evil spirits, are affirmed in *all* the special commissions that Christ ever gave to his apostles, and the original design of their appointment, as well as the opening and execution of their commissions, are set down with the greatest exactness. Our Lord’s first choice of the twelve, together with the end proposed by it, is thus described : “ He called to him his disciples, “ and out of them he chose twelve, whom also “ he named apostles :”—and, “ ordained them “ that they should be with him, and that he “ might send them forth to preach, and to “ have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast “ out devils<sup>x</sup>.” The actual communication of that power over dæmons, which was at first intended when the twelve were ordained, is afterwards particularly expressed : “ And when he “ had called to him his twelve disciples, he “ gave them power over unclean spirits, to “ cast them out, and to heal all manner of “ sickness, and all manner of disease<sup>y</sup>.” Here also sicknesses and diseases of every kind

<sup>x</sup> Luke vi. 13. Mark iii. 14, 15.

<sup>y</sup> Matth. x. 1.

are clearly distinguished from possessions. Next, the express orders which were given to the twelve, to go forth and cast out dæmons, are distinctly recorded: "These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying—  
 "As ye go, preach, saying, the kingdom of heaven is at hand, heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils."<sup>a</sup>  
 And the performance of this mission is as carefully related: "They went forth and preached that men should repent, and they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them."<sup>b</sup>  
 When our Lord gave to his apostles their final commission to preach the Gospel to all nations, he spake in the following manner: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature."<sup>c</sup>—"And these signs shall follow them that believe: In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues."<sup>d</sup>—And the accomplishment of these promises, after the ascension of Christ, is minutely expressed in the sacred history<sup>e</sup>, as is well known even to common readers. We therefore leave it for others to determine, with what truth or candour it can be said

<sup>a</sup> Matth. x. 5, 7, and 8.<sup>b</sup> Mark xvi. 15 and 17.<sup>c</sup> Mark vi. 12 and 13.<sup>d</sup> Acts v. 16:

by any one, “ That the casting out demons  
 “ was never asserted either by Christ or his  
 “ apostles, when they were opening the con-  
 “ tents of their commission ; and that it was  
 “ scarce ever incidentally mentioned, but in  
 “ relating the disorder and cure of demo-  
 “ niacs.”

§ 22. According to Mr. Farmer, it hath  
 been supposed by several theological writers,  
 “ That the devil was permitted, about the  
 “ time of Christ, to give some unusual proofs  
 “ of his power and malice in attacking the  
 “ bodies of men ; and that it was necessary,  
 “ as well as proper, for our Lord to af-  
 “ ford sensible and public evidences of an  
 “ absolute power over Satan and his confe-  
 “ derates, by dispossessing them.” In opposi-  
 tion to this opinion, as stated by himself, our  
 author says, “ Whenever God commissions  
 “ his messengers to perform miracles for the  
 “ conviction of mankind, he instructs them  
 “ to explain to the world the great ends pro-  
 “ posed by them.—The silence of Scripture  
 “ therefore concerning what is supposed to have  
 “ been the grand and peculiar design of the  
 “ cure of demoniacs, is a sufficient reason for  
 “ rejecting it ; unless it can be clearly and cer-  
 “ tainly inferred from the nature of the work  
 itself,

“ itself, which no one will affirm that under-  
 “ stands it aright <sup>d</sup>.” Now, it does not ap-  
 pear even from this gentleman’s own state of  
 the case, that the writers here alluded to ever  
 considered the above supposition of theirs, as  
 containining *the grand and peculiar* design of  
 the cure of dæmoniacs; he therefore gives a  
 very unjust turn to their ideas on this occasion.  
 However, without concerning ourselves at all  
 about the propriety or impropriety of *human*  
*suppositions, unfairly represented*, we beg leave to  
 observe, “ That the *express* declaration of  
 “ Scripture, concerning the *immediate* design of  
 “ casting out dæmons, is a *sufficient* reason for  
 “ admitting the fact *as stated by the evangelists*.”  
 The word of God is not altered by the sup-  
 positions of any author. The miraculous  
 cure of bodily diseases, without doubt, ought  
 to be considered as an authentic proof that  
 Christ was truly sent of God, but this could  
 not, *of itself*, be an immediate and decisive evi-  
 dence, that the KINGDOM of God also was  
 truly come. But our Lord urges the casting  
 out dæmons as a direct proof, *in its own*  
*nature*, of that kingdom, the very end of  
 which is to “ destroy the works of the devil.”  
 “ If I,” says Christ, “ by the finger of God  
 “ cast out dæmons, no doubt the kingdom

<sup>d</sup> On Dem. p. 379—385.

“ of God is come upon you.” This was never said, nor indeed could it have been said, with propriety, of any other miracle, no not even of the resurrection of a dead body to life; because such a work was only an authentic proof, that he at whose word or prayer it was performed was a true messenger of God, and that what he delivered was agreeable to the Divine Will, yet still, it was not *peculiar* to the kingdom of heaven. But, the casting out dæmons was a proper evidence of our Lord’s power over the *devil* and his *associates*, and a direct specimen of its exercise in *abolishing the influence* of evil spirits, and was therefore, in fact, *the real appearance* of that very kingdom of God, out of which Satan with all his legions shall be cast, as also every thing that offendeth or maketh a lie. Jesus, therefore, in order to illustrate more fully the design of this work, as here expressed by himself, immediately adds a further remark, which never can be applied to bodily diseases : “ When the strong one, *armed*, keepeth his palace or court, his goods are in peace; “ but when one stronger than he cometh upon “ him, and subdues him, he taketh from him “ *all his armour* wherein he trusted, and divideth “ his spoil \*.” Here the chief of evil spirits is

\* Luke xi. 21, 22.

described

described as “the strong one,” supported by his associates, in “keeping” what he had unlawfully plundered ; and Christ is represented as “over-coming him,” and as casting out also those associates, the instruments of his power ; which is indeed to “take from him *all his armour*, on “which he depended.” By this fact Jesus proves himself to be “stronger than he,” and renders it evident, from the very nature of the work itself, that he is the true promised “seed, who “was to bruise the head of the serpent \*,” and “destroy the works of the devil.” Hence Christ with the strictest propriety urges this miracle above all others, as a direct proof in its own nature that “the kingdom of God is come unto “us ;” because the establishment of this kingdom necessarily implies the final overthrow of him, who had wickedly brought into the world sin, and sorrow, and death. We cannot therefore reject the plain and obvious sense of those terms in which our Lord expresseth the immediate and peculiar design of casting out dæmons, without denying the chief doctrines of revelation, as well as the truth of the Gospel history, and turning the words of the Son of God into foolishness ; while we must represent the Saviour of the world as trifling with mankind.

\* Genes. iii. 15.



We shall now close this chapter with observing, That many of the arguments, urged by Mr. Farmer against dæmoniacal possessions affect the competency of the apostles as witnesses, and the credit of the sacred history, as much as they can do the doctrine in dispute ; while at the same time they imply a denial of the most capital articles of the Christian faith, *expressly asserted* in the Holy Scriptures. The principles, on which he grounds all that he hath written concerning the nature of miracles, and the agency of evil spirits, are these, “ That  
 “ none besides Jehovah, the one true God, can  
 “ controul the laws and course of nature ;  
 “ and that no superior beings whatever, but  
 “ God himself, are capable of producing any  
 “ effects on this earthly globe, or within  
 “ the limits of the human system.” Hence he appropriates all miracles to God alone ; having first, without any real occasion for it, or advantage to his own system, arbitrarily defined such works to be a violation of the laws of nature : and on the same principle he rejects dæmoniacal possessions ; after assuring us, without any proof, that all effects arising from the supposed influence of evil spirits would be contrary to those general rules by which the world is governed, as well

as inconsistent with the natural power of such beings. His arguments, therefore, on this subject, notwithstanding the great pains which he hath taken to conceal it, seem to be directly pointed against all that hath been advanced by the sacred writers, concerning good and evil angels, the entrance of sin and death into the world, the pernicious agency of the devil, and the reason which is every where assigned in the Gospel for the appearance of Christ and the kingdom of God. That we have not here misrepresented either this gentleman's principles or arguments, shall be made still more apparent in the subsequent chapters.

C H A P.

## C H A P. VI.

*The Principles on which Mr. Farmer denies the Agency of superior Beings within the Limits of the human System, examined, and shewn to be either inapplicable to the Gospel Dæmoniacks, or a flat contradiction to the Holy Scriptures.*

**M**R. Farmer begins his "Introduction to his Essay on Dæmoniacks," in the following manner: "In a late *Dissertation on Miracles*, the Author attempted to shew, that all effects produced in the system of nature, contrary to the general laws by which it is governed, are proper miracles; and that all miracles are works appropriate to God." This gentleman should have first proved, that there ever were any "effects produced in the system of nature, contrary to the general laws by which it is governed." Without this, his "Dissertation on Miracles" must be considered as a vague and groundless hypothesis, and himself as zealous in applying to God certain effects, which, for any thing that yet appears, never had any real existence. "This," to use his

own language, “ is the fault in reasoning that “ logicians call begging the question ;” for although he may view his own suppositions as on a level with authenticated facts, perhaps other men will not view them in that light. He hath not even attempted to shew, that the resurrection of a dead body to life, or any other miracle, is an effect contrary to the general laws of matter and motion ; nor is it likely that he should ever succeed, were he to undertake the proof of this matter. We may as well talk of large extended bodies without extension, as of motion contrary to the laws of motion, or of effects produced in matter contrary to the nature and laws of matter\*. If such things were possible, yet it would not be in the power of man to form any judgment concerning their reality, because they never can be objects either of our reason or senses, on any known principle. “ But,” says he, “ the case of the Gospel “ demoniacs is by many considered as an objection against the general principle of that “ Dissertation, as well as against what is there “ advanced with respect to demons in particular\*.” This observation, by whomsoever made, is a very just one, and, lest it should

\* Farm. on Mir. p. 8—41.

\* Essay on Dem. Introd. p. 1.

be thought that the Gospel dæmoniacs are the only objection to his scheme, we beg leave to add another remark of the same kind, That the most important doctrines of revelation, as well as the express design of our Lord's appearance in the world, seem to be all denied by the general principle of that "Dissertation," wherein the Author labours to prove, if we understand him right, "That there are no superior created spirits whatever, that have any power and influence within the limits of the human system." If this be true, there could be no real occasion for the trouble which he hath given himself, either concerning the supposed nature of dæmons, or supernatural possessions. We therefore look upon the greatest part of that "Dissertation," and the whole of the *Essay on Demoniacs*, only as a feeble attempt to reconcile the language of Scripture with certain principles, which, if plainly expressed by themselves, and separately avowed, would have been immediately rejected by serious Christians in general. It is now our business, to strip those principles of every cover, whether accidental or designed, and to shew that they are in themselves directly contrary to the tenor and professed end of revelation, as well as inconsistent with natural religion.

§ 2. Mr. Farmer maintains, with great zeal, what we apprehend no one ever denied, “ That God has not granted to superior beings “ a power of controuling the laws of nature “ at pleasure <sup>b</sup>.” We have no reason to imagine, that it is in the power of any created being to controul the laws of nature at all, far less at pleasure. But the inference, which our author draws from the above premises, is somewhat singular: “ Hence,” says he, “ arises the impossibility of miracles being “ ever performed without the order of God. “ Not that the works themselves, abstractedly “ considered, require the exertion of an infinite power, but the course of nature being “ a divine settlement, it cannot, in any instance whatever, be overturned by any “ finite power, without God’s express appointment <sup>c</sup>.” What are we to understand by *the order* of God, in this passage? Is it possible for any created being to controul the laws of nature? If not; will God order his creatures to undertake such works as these, which it belongs not to their nature as creatures, even to attempt, and which they never can have ability to perform? Surely not. How then can we think of God

<sup>b</sup> On Mir. p. 92.

<sup>c</sup> Ibid. p. 94.

as *appointing* any creature to *overturn the course of nature*? The above-quoted passage, therefore, if it really means any thing, must be understood as denying, that it is possible for created beings to be employed in working miracles: not that any proof is offered in support of this opinion, besides an arbitrary definition, “ that miracles are *real transgressions* “ of the laws of nature, which God alone is “ able to controul.” But what are we to understand by this exception, “ not that the “ works themselves, abstractedly considered, “ require the exertion of an infinite power?” The power of God is infinite. Now, is it possible for the laws of nature to be controuled without the immediate exertion of God’s own power? No, says Mr. Farmer, “ he has “ not delegated, he cannot delegate, to any “ of his creatures any power over them<sup>d</sup>.” And he accordingly informs us, that God’s “ omnipotence is the only adequate cause “ we are capable of discovering in the whole “ compass of existence, of those effects which “ are called miraculous<sup>e</sup>.” Hence, then, it is clear and evident, according to this gentleman’s own account, that though such works themselves, abstractedly considered, do not require

<sup>d</sup> On Mir. p. 97.<sup>e</sup> Ibid. p. 68.

the exertion of an infinite power, yet they never can be performed without the exertion of that power which is infinite. This distinction should have been passed over without any notice, had not Mr. Farmer grounded upon it the greatest part of a curious pamphlet in defence of himself from some obscure charges of having been obliged in his “Dissertation on Miracles,” to “a treatise of the late Mr. Lemoine’s on the same subject.” This writer, it seems, had asserted, that “*God alone is the immediate efficient cause of miracles*, and that in many cases, *an infinite power* is plainly requisite to perform them<sup>f</sup>.” Now, Mr. Farmer doth not suppose, in his “Dissertation,” that miracles themselves, abstractedly considered, require the exertion of infinite power: no; he only writes, that no power can perform miracles, but that which is infinite<sup>g</sup>. And from this circumstance of difference, he says, in his “Examination of Mr. Lemoine,” “it must be needless to shew, how essentially distinct and opposite our ideas are, when we both

<sup>f</sup> See Exam. of Mr. Lemoine, p. 16, 17; in which Treatise, the writer attacks the chief arguments of his own Dissertation, while he objects to Mr. Lemoine’s scheme.

<sup>g</sup> On Mir. p. 47, 48.

“ appropriate



“ appropriate all such works to God. He  
 “ must be a superficial reader, indeed, who  
 “ doth not discern the disagreement there is  
 “ between us, in every thing, but our using  
 “ the same term to express those ideas <sup>b</sup>.”

If this gentleman ever wrote any thing that cannot deceive even superficial readers, it is on this very article. In “ the third chapter of his: “ Dissertation\*,” he labours to shew, that the Holy Scriptures deny any created being to be capable of working a miracle, and then sums up the section in the following words: “ We  
 “ have attempted to shew, that the Scrip-  
 “ ture denies the ability of performing any  
 “ miracles, to angels whether good or evil;  
 “ to the spirits of departed men; to the hea-  
 “ then deities; to magicians—and—to all false  
 “ prophets;” and, in the next section, after observing that the Scriptures refer miracles to God as their author, he immediately adds;  
 “ Nor do they ascribe them to him *eminently*,  
 “ as some pretend; but absolutely *appropriate*  
 “ them to him *alone*†.” Doth not our author, by asserting these things, evidently deny, as well as Mr. Lemoine, that God ever effects any miracles through the mediation of other beings, or imparts the power of perform-

<sup>b</sup> Examia. p. 18.

\* P. 327.

† P. 334.

ing them on any special occasion? Nay, he says, " If any being whatever can perform " miracles besides God ; it is not true, that " God alone can perform them : " and then, to strengthen the doctrine, he assures us, " that the Scriptures represent miracles as " works peculiar to God <sup>i</sup>." Can it, then, be any crime to say, that Mr. Farmer, as Mr. Lemoine had done before him, affirms that *God alone is the immediate efficient cause of all true miracles*? Have we any proof, that Mr. Lemoine *prevaricated* on this subject? Why our author should affect to be so very severe against a deceased writer for attributing *true miracles* to God alone, is best known to himself.

§ 3. Mr. Farmer, it must be confessed, carries this doctrine much farther than Mr. Lemoine, and excludes all angels, whether good or evil, from the performance of miracles, on such principles as suppose them to be incapable of operating within the limits of the human system. In " the second chapter " of his *Dissertation*, he attempts to shew, that the same arguments, which prove the existence of superior spirits, conclude against

<sup>i</sup> P. 336.

their agency in this lower world. “—What-  
 “ ever,” says he, “ their natural powers may  
 “ be, and however freely they may be al-  
 “ lowed to use them; they are limited and  
 “ determined to such purposes as God has  
 “ appointed, and cannot possibly be extend-  
 “ ed beyond the sphere assigned them by the  
 “ Creator.—Though there be a strict con-  
 “ nexion between the different orders of crea-  
 “ tures on this earth, who all belong to the  
 “ same system; yet none of them have any  
 “ possible communication from this lower  
 “ world, with the inhabitants of different  
 “ systems; none of them are able to traverse  
 “ the universe, or to pass the bounds of their  
 “ proper dwelling. And this must be the  
 “ case in other systems, supposing them to be  
 “ regulated by the same laws, which take  
 “ place in our own. Their inhabitants may  
 “ have larger capacities than mankind, and a  
 “ wider province assigned them; and yet  
 “ have no more power over us, than we  
 “ have over them; they may have no com-  
 “ munication with us, nor any influence  
 “ beyond the limits of their own globe\*.”  
 We cannot but look upon the application of  
 this argument, as a full proof, that Mr.

\* On Mir. p. 58, 59, 60.

Farmer will not allow any superior created intelligent natures, but such as are confined to some particular globe or other, as much as men are to the earth. If this be not his persuasion, must he not know, that the whole of the section, with respect to the present subject, is impertinent? And indeed, from the close of it, he evidently appears to have been aware of this circumstance. “Should it,” says he, “be said, “that allowing that superior created beings have only a limited sphere of action assigned them; yet how does it appear, that this lower world itself is not their appointed sphere, and that they have not a power of interposing to work miracles upon this earthly globe <sup>1</sup>?”” The questions are fair and pointed; and it is natural to expect a candid and direct answer: that which our author is pleased to give, immediately follows and begins another section; “This,” says he, “being a question of fact, it is manifestly incumbent upon those who affirm, that miracles have been performed by evil beings acting without the order of God, to produce the facts, upon which they chuse to rest their cause, and to establish them by

<sup>1</sup> On Mir. p. 69.

“ an evidence which cannot be overturned <sup>m</sup>.” Is it not surprising that this gentleman should, in an instant, forget the import of his own words, even while they laid before him? The question, as stated by himself, relates to superior created beings, *in general*, acting within the limits assigned them by their maker; but his answer is only concerning “evil beings, “acting without the order of God.” The fact to which his question relates, is this: supposing the earth to be an appointed sphere of action, for some beings superior to men, may not such beings have a power of working miracles on this globe? The terms are unjustly changed, while an answer is given neither pertinent nor generous; “That if any ascribe “miracles to evil beings, acting without “the order of God, let them produce the “facts, and establish them by an evidence “which cannot be overturned.” This, if put into plainer language, may be thus properly expressed: “I grant that there are “some very strong objections against my “scheme, and several historical facts of great “authority, which never can be reconciled “with it; but what are these things to me? “I have asserted what I thought fit to be con-

<sup>m</sup> On Mir. p. 70.

“sidered

“ sidered as truth. It is therefore manifestly  
 “ incumbent on *others*, to remove all objec-  
 “ tions, and to support those received facts,  
 “ by such an evidence as I shall choose to  
 “ admit and call authentic ; for if it doth  
 “ not please me, I shall certainly affirm, at  
 “ least, that *perhaps*, it *may be* overturned.”

§ 4. To the above cited answer the following note is subjoined. “ To prevent mistakes,  
 “ it may not be improper to observe, that  
 “ it is not here intended to prove, that no su-  
 “ perior beings stand in any relation to our  
 “ system, or that they never operate within  
 “ its limits in a manner imperceptible by  
 “ the human senses, but merely that they do  
 “ not interpose sensibly, and in a miraculous  
 “ manner. We are not so well acquainted  
 “ with the regulations of the spiritual, as with  
 “ those of the material world.” We cannot  
 tell what to make of this note, unless our  
 Author designed it as a future retreat, if he  
 should happen to be too closely pursued on  
 this subject. However, be that as it may, to  
 prevent mistakes, it will not be improper for  
 us to observe, that the fact in question, so far  
 as we are concerned with it, supposes that su-  
 perior created beings may stand in some re-  
 lation to our system, and frequently operate  
 within

within its limits, in a manner imperceptible by the human senses. The truth of this is all we contend for, which, if allowed, will render it impossible for Mr. Farmer to shew that the common phraseology of Scripture, concerning the present subject, is not *strictly* proper; or to prove that there never was a *real* dæmoniac in the world. The impossibility of such a fact, which he often asserts, never can be shewn, while he *allows* that superior spirits may operate within the limits of the human system. The facts in question are not considered as miraculous events. If it be said, that Mr. Farmer doth not *allow*, that superior spirits may operate within the limits of the human system, but that he only says, "He did not intend to *disprove* it," may we not then infer, that he neither *allows* nor *disproves* the influence of superior beings within the limits of the human system? If it be answered, that such an assertion as this, in open defiance of two large octavo volumes, might justly be considered as uncandid, we reply, that it is certainly fair to leave this note in its native obscurity, and to be determined by our Author's own subsequent assertions on this point, and by that account which himself afterwards gives concerning his real intention, both in that section to which the

note is annexed, and in the foregoing one. He cannot well object to his own declarations.

§ 5. We shall, therefore, proceed to what our Author further advances concerning the agency of superior spirits. “God,” says he, “is manifest in every part of nature, but “who can point out the effects of other “spirits, and their operations on the universe? “And if we see no effects of their agency on “this earthly globe, if no such effects have “ever been seen; there can be no ground “from reason to ascribe it to them.” This sentence evidently supposes, that *no effects* arising from the agency of superior spirits, *were ever seen* on this earthly globe; if so, neither any doctrine nor history can be supported, which either implies or alledges such facts. The consequences are too obvious to be overlooked. He then immediately adds, “It is as repugnant to the observation and “experience of all ages, to ascribe to evil spirits a miraculous power, as it is to ascribe “life to the inanimate, or speech to the brute “creation.” This undoubtedly supposes, that evil spirits in themselves are no more ca-

<sup>2</sup> On Mir. p. 82, 83.



pable of working miracles, than dumb animals are of speech, or stocks and stones of spontaneous motion and intelligence. Superior beings, therefore, could bear no part in the performance of such works, unless themselves were first made the subjects of a miracle, as much as Balaam's ass was when it spoke, or as much as a stone would be, should it rise up and deliver a message. In what light, then, we are to consider the agency of superior beings as mentioned in the Scriptures, and what kind of possible influence is allowed them within the human system, let the reader judge. Afterwards, near the close of this very section, at the beginning of which is the above-cited note, our Author thus sums up the whole of his argument. "In the foregoing section, we have endeavoured to shew, that if we reason from analogy, and that view which we are able to take of the works of God; the various orders of beings superior to the human kind, *act only within a certain limited sphere.* And if what we have advanced farther in the present section be just, *this lower world is not their appointed sphere of action.*" This is equally clear and decisive; for if "the various orders of beings superior to the human kind *act only within a limited sphere;*" and if "*this lower world is not their* S *appointed*

“ *appointed sphere of action*,” then they stand in no relation to our system, nor ever operate within its limits ; “ and consequently,” as this gentleman says, “ they are prevented from “ working miracles by the very law of their “ nature °—.” But how that note, already mentioned, stole into such an interesting part of his book, and why it should contradict what goes before it, what stands over it, and the strongest assertions that follow it, who may presume to tell !

§ 6. In the next chapter, our Author is pleased thus to express himself. “ We do not “ however deny, that Christ might employ “ angels in executing his orders, and particularly in working miracles ; for they are “ all made subject to him. Nevertheless, it “ does not appear from the Scriptures, that “ they can perform miracles of themselves, “ and without an immediate divine commission. On the contrary, according to “ the Scripture account of them, if they “ bring any messages to men, they first receive “ them from God ; if they controul the “ course of nature, it is by authority from “ the Lord of nature ; and if they interpose

° On Mir. p. 87, 88.

“ at all in the affairs of our system, it is not  
 “ as they see fit themselves, but according  
 “ to the command of God, as the ministers  
 “ of his will, which they execute as punctually  
 “ as those passive instruments of his  
 “ providence, the luminaries of heaven, and  
 “ the elements of nature <sup>p</sup>.” And, then, he goes on to persuade his readers, that the inanimate parts of the creation are in the Scriptures styled angels : the instances which he gives shall be examined in the next chapter. Here let it be observed, how careful this writer is never to say, either that Christ *did employ* intelligent beings superior to men in working miracles ; or, that they ever *did bring* any messages to men, or ever *did interpose* in the affairs of our system. No, he has never yet allowed any of these things, nor are they ever mentioned by him unless hypothetically with an *if*, or a *supposing it to be so*. And if we would express the real meaning of the above passage, in connection with the foregoing arguments, and the professed design of his reasoning as stated by himself, it must be in the following terms : “ We do not, however, deny, that Christ, in working miracles, *might* employ those intelligent natures,

<sup>p</sup> On Mir. p. 148.

“ whose appointed sphere of action is Saturn,  
 “ or any other of the heavenly bodies; for  
 “ they are all made subject to him. Never-  
 “ theless, it doth not appear from the Scrip-  
 “ tures, that they can transport themselves  
 “ hither, and perform miracles on this globe,  
 “ of themselves, without immediate divine  
 “ assistance, and a special commission. On  
 “ the contrary, according to the Scripture  
 “ account of them, *if* they who live in  
 “ the polar star, or any other distant globe,  
 “ bring messages to us, or men carry par-  
 “ ticular orders to the planets, they must  
 “ first receive them from God; *if* those in-  
 “ telligent beings which belong to Jupiter,  
 “ controul the course of nature on our earth,  
 “ or the human species perform wonders in  
 “ remote worlds, it must be by an authority  
 “ from the Lord of nature; and *if* the in-  
 “ habitants of distant globes interpose at all  
 “ in the affairs of our system, it is not as  
 “ they think fit themselves, but according to  
 “ the command of God, by whose power  
 “ alone they can be conveyed to the earth,  
 “ and without whose immediate energy they  
 “ could not subsist and operate here; so that  
 “ they must perform his will in as passive a  
 “ manner as the luminaries of heaven, or the  
 “ elements of nature.” We cannot suppose,  
 that

that our Author meant such a concession as would have been a flat contradiction both to every argument that he had advanced for above an hundred pages, and to his own most exprefs assertions; or that his language became so happily obscure, and was so well calculated to ward off the Scripture account concerning good angels, by a mere accident. No, no: such thoughts would derogate from the acknowledged merits and abilities of this writer. If we have, in any respect, now put a wrong construction upon what he *really* intended in the above paragraph, we are very much mistaken. For, in the beginning of this section, he only speaks of angels as symbolical of an extraordinary providence, and miraculous interpositions; and about three pages before this, he delivers his mind in the following significant language. “ The best arguments which reason can employ to prove  
 “ the existence of superior created intelligences, do much more strongly prove, that  
 “ they can act only within that particular  
 “ sphere appointed them by their creator. It  
 “ has likewise been shewn, that the observation and experience of all ages are a full  
 “ demonstration that they are not at liberty  
 “ to perform miracles in this lower world;  
 “ no such works having ever been performed

“ in it, but such as may fitly be ascribed to  
 “ God.” This passage sufficiently shews, that  
 we have not misrepresented our Author’s rea-  
 soning; for it may be considered, both as a  
 grave and deliberate repetition of his real  
 opinion concerning the agency of superior be-  
 ings, and as a proof that *if* he ever said  
 Christ might employ superior *intelligent* na-  
 tures in working miracles, he only spake of  
 it as a thing *possible* to the Deity, and not as  
 what ever had *really* happened; since he says, we  
 have “ a full demonstration, that they are not  
 “ at liberty to perform miracles in this lower  
 “ world, no such works having ever been  
 “ performed in it, but such as may fitly be  
 “ ascribed to God.” If this gentleman therefore  
 was sincere in his “ Dissertation on Miracles,”  
 he must be considered as intending to prove  
 that superior beings have no more power within  
 the limits of our system, than men have in  
 distant globes; and that there is no other  
 possibility for their influence here, than there  
 is for our’s in remote worlds. And that  
 this was his real intention we have other proofs  
 at hand, were they needful.

‘ On Mir. p. 142, 143.

§ 7. We cannot well omit the following sentence, which makes a part of the last-quoted paragraph. "Deists," says he, "more especially, who deny the existence both of angels and devils, must allow that if any miracles are performed, they can have none but God for their author, and that the settled course of things is unalterable but by his immediate will<sup>r</sup>." We hope that Mr. Farmer and the Deists are not the *only persons* who maintain, that the settled course of things is unalterable, but by the immediate will of God." But we do not recollect that this gentleman any where confesses the existence either of angels or devils, any more than they; we do not therefore understand why Deists should be represented as denying this article, any more than himself. He had, indeed, before informed us, that "*unbelievers*, in order to discredit the evidence of the Jewish and Christian revelations," urged the power of superior created beings, as equal to the performance of miracles, and maintained that their reality alone would not establish their divine original, because the works might be performed by other powers, lower than the divine<sup>s</sup>." And in the same passage, the following words are immediately added, "Nor

<sup>r</sup> On Mir. p. 142, 143.      <sup>s</sup> Ibid. p. 43, 44.

“ is this the language only of the avowed  
 “ adversaries of all supernatural revelation,  
 “ but even of very many of its sincere and  
 “ zealous advocates,—” among whom he men-  
 tions and attacks the great “ Dr. Clarke.” But  
 we are now given to understand, that those “*un-*  
 “ *believers*,” who in this manner fought “ to dis-  
 “ credit the evidence of the Jewish and Chris-  
 “ tian revelations,” were not Deists ; for the  
 “ Deists,” as we are here assured, “ deny the exist-  
 “ ence both of angels and devils.” Those “*un-*  
 “ *believers*” mentioned in the above-cited pas-  
 sage were certain persons who held opinions  
 concerning this subject in common with Dr.  
 Clarke, whereas the “ Deists ” agree with our  
 author in denying the influence of superior  
 beings on this earthly globe, and in maintain-  
 ing that none can perform miracles besides  
 God himself. This agreement between Mr.  
 Farmer and the Deists we are very ready  
 to acknowledge, and to support the fact  
 with additional evidences. He supposes, that  
 there may be “ in the universe creatures as  
 “ much superior to man, as man is to the  
 “ meanest reptile,” but at the same time main-  
 tains, “ that they cannot extend their natural  
 “ powers beyond a certain limited sphere of  
 “ action appointed them by God, and hence he  
 “ infers that their influence reacheth not to  
 “ this



“ this earthly globe<sup>†</sup>.” Lord Bolingbroke supposes the existence of superior created intelligences, and thinks it probable, “ that “ there may be as much difference between “ some other creatures of God, and man, as “ there is between man and an oyster<sup>‡</sup>.” And yet in opposition to Mr. Wollaston, who says, that there may be above us beings of greater powers and more perfect intellects than we are, acting as the ministers of Divine Providence, his lordship reasons just as Mr. Farmer does. He pretends, that no direct proof can be given for the agency of such beings, and argues that “ if these angels act “ by the immediate command of God, it is “ in opposition to his general providence, “ and to supply the defects of it; and that “ it is to give up the government of mankind “ to those beings.” Our Author urges the very same idea with his lordship in the following manner: “ If it be true in fact, that “ God governs the world by general laws, “ and it be necessary that he should do so; “ he has not delegated, he cannot delegate, “ to any of his creatures any power over

<sup>†</sup> On Mir. p. 57—60.

<sup>‡</sup> Leland, View of Deif. vol. ii. p. 236.

“ them. To do this would be to resign the  
 “ reins of government †.”

§ 8. Mr. Farmer and his lordship agree also in what we call an uncandid method of reasoning, while each combats opinions that never existed in the minds of those persons against whom they direct their arguments. Mr. Wollaston never intimates that these superior beings can controul the laws of nature, nor doth he say that they ever “ act in opposition to God’s general providence.” On the contrary, he thus delivers his opinion: “ As  
 “ *we ourselves*, by the use of our powers, do  
 “ many times interpose and alter the course  
 “ of things within our sphere from what it  
 “ would be, if they were left entirely to the  
 “ laws of motion and gravitation, without  
 “ being said to alter those *laws*; so may these  
 “ *superior* beings likewise in respect of things  
 “ within their spheres, much larger be sure,  
 “ the least of them all, than ours is: only with  
 “ this difference, that as their knowledge is  
 “ more extensive, their intellects purer, their  
 “ reason better, they may be much *properer*  
 “ instruments of Divine Providence with respect to *us*, than we can be with respect *one*

† On Mir. p. 97.

“ to

“ *to another*, or to the *animals* below us. I can-  
 “ not think, indeed, that the power of these  
 “ beings is so large, as to alter or suspend the  
 “ *general laws* of the world; or that the world  
 “ is like a bungling piece of clock-work,  
 “ which requires to be oft set backward or  
 “ forward by them; or that they can at  
 “ pleasure change their condition to ape us,  
 “ or inferior beings——yet (I will repeat it  
 “ again) as men may be so placed as to be-  
 “ come, even by the free exercise of their own  
 “ powers, *instruments* of God’s particular pro-  
 “ vidence to other men (or animals); so may  
 “ we well suppose, that these *higher* beings  
 “ may be so *distributed* through the universe,  
 “ and subject to such an œconomy (though I  
 “ pretend not to tell what that is) as may  
 “ render *them also* instruments of the same  
 “ providence; and that they may, in pro-  
 “ portion to their greater abilities, be capable,  
 “ *consistently with the laws of nature*, some way  
 “ or other, though not in our way, of in-  
 “ fluencing human affairs in proper places.”  
 In this passage those doctrines are concisely ex-  
 pressed, which Mr. Farmer hath undertaken to  
 refute in his “Dissertation on Miracles.” Now  
 what hath he done towards such a refutation?

He hath urged a great many useless arguments in order to shew, that although the created intelligences of different systems around us may be far superior to men, yet their sphere of action is limited, and as much confined to their own proper globe as ours is to the earth; that no one can point out the effects of spirits, and their operation on the universe; that no effects of their agency have ever been seen on this earthly globe; that no superior created beings can controul the laws, and overturn the course, of nature; that to invest them with so great a power, would be to resign the reins of government; and that for these reasons, neither good nor evil angels, nor the souls of departed men, can work miracles. On these principles, as we have seen, he grounds his *Essay on Demoniacs*. But who supposes, that the proper inhabitants of distant globes have any influence within the limits of the human system? Who imputes to superior created beings a power over the laws and course of nature? Who contends for a miraculous influence of superior spirits in the common administration of God's providence? Or, who ascribes to *dead men* an influence over the affairs of this world, much more, a miraculous power? The sacred writers, without supposing any of these absurdities, frequently speak of  
superior

superior beings as operating within the limits of the human system, and so may other men. Our Author has not yet suggested any argument that affects the principles on which this doctrine is grounded. On the contrary, he takes for granted the very things which ought to have been proved by the clearest evidence, “ That there are no superior created intelligences, but such as are as much limited in their operations to some distant globe or other, as men are to the earth ;” and then he labours to prove, that such beings can have no influence on this earthly globe, and that they are prevented by the very law of their nature from working miracles : just as if opinions of this kind had really been maintained by those persons whom he would be considered as having refuted.

§ 9. We should not have been so minute in our enquiries concerning those principles on which Mr. Farmer rejects the agency of superior created beings within the limits of the human system, if he had not shewn so much displeasure on being supposed to deny the influence of fallen angels on this earthly globe. “ I cannot,” says he, writing to the late Dr. Worthington, “ conclude this letter without observing farther, that from the principles

“ ciples here contended for, *viz.* “ That pos-  
 ““ sessions were referred to human spirits,” it  
 “ cannot be inferred that I deny the existence  
 “ of fallen angels, much less that I deny the  
 “ existence of human souls in a state of sepa-  
 “ ration from the body\*.” Upon this we  
 beg leave to observe, that Mr. Farmer hath  
 no where denied the existence of fallen an-  
 gels, and that, to the best of our knowledge,  
 Dr. Worthington hath no where charged him  
 with any *such denial*. Mr. Farmer hath indeed  
 been very careful *never to allow the influence* of  
 fallen angels, within the limits of the human  
 system; and, very consistently with his wonted  
 circumspection in this article, he thus proceeds,  
 “ You are pleased to tell the world, “ that I have  
 ““ made short work with the devil and his an-  
 ““ gels, and have done more than all the exor-  
 ““ cists put together ever pretended to ; that I  
 ““ have laid the devil, and all other evil spi-  
 ““ rits, banished them out of the world, and  
 ““ in a manner destroyed their very existence.”  
 “ There may be much wit, but indeed, Sir,  
 “ there is no truth in this language.” We  
 have frequently admired this gentleman’s ex-  
 treme caution, in the use of terms, as often  
 as he toucheth upon those things which he

\* Far. Lett. to Worthin. p. 82, 83,

doth not choose openly to avow. Whenever it is said that Mr. Farmer has laid the devil, and banished all other evil spirits out of the world, we do readily agree with him, that “there is no truth in this *language* ;” nor do we suppose that he considered himself as having done any such thing. But whenever it is said, that Mr. Farmer hath attempted to prove, that *no superior created spirits ever operate within the limits of the human system*, we do affirm, that there is much truth in this narration, for we have his own express declarations in support of the fact, by whomsoever related. However, he goes on with his defence, “ I have never denied, nor could I, without great absurdity, take upon me to deny, the existence of evil spirits originally of a rank superior to mankind. And, as we are ignorant of the laws of the spiritual world, it would be great presumption to take upon us to determine the sphere of their operation.” To this it may be justly answered, that there was no occasion for Mr. Farmer, on his principles of reasoning, either to deny or confess the existence of evil spirits originally of a rank superior to mankind ; and that he hath accordingly been very careful neither to deny nor confess the existence of such spirits. Nevertheless himself hath told us, “ that he  
“ endeavoured

“endeavoured to shew, that the *various or-*  
 “*ders* of beings superior to the human kind,  
 “*act only within a certain limited sphere; and*  
 “*that this lower world is not their appointed*  
 “*sphere of action;*” and, even in this defence  
 of himself, he takes care not to allow the in-  
 fluence of evil spirits, and at the same time,  
 intimates that it would be great presumption  
 in any one to determine the human system to  
 be the sphere of their operation. “But,”  
 says he, “the question is, whether possessions  
 “are referred to fallen angels, or to human  
 “spirits? To say they are referred to the  
 “latter, is by no means to banish the for-  
 “mer out of the world.” This latter clause  
 of the sentence is very true. But when it is  
 repeatedly said, “that the various orders of  
 “superior intelligences are confined within  
 “the limits of their own proper system or  
 “sphere of action, that their influence  
 “reacheth not to this lower world, and that  
 “no effects of their agency have ever been  
 “seen on this earthly globe;” *then* it is, in  
 fact, plainly asserted, that there are no supe-  
 rior beings that ever had, or can have, any  
 influence over mankind; and since the whole  
 of the *Essay on Demoniacs* is professedly ground-  
 ed on these principles, the *first* question un-  
 doubtedly was, “Whether there are any supe-  
 “rior



rior evil spirits, or fallen angels, that are capable of operating within the limits of the human system?" This Mr. Farmer hath evidently answered in the negative, if there be any sincerity or meaning in the foregoing language, and, agreeably with the arguments on which this answer is founded, he hath undertaken to shew, that by dæmons the sacred writers meant nothing more than the souls of departed men; that the term *Satan* is not put for any fallen angel; and that there never was or could be a real dæmoniac in the world. He hath also explained almost every passage in the New Testament, where the word *devil* occurs, so as to exclude the idea of any intelligent being, superior to the nature of man, and has interwoven the leading principles of his *Dissertation on Miracles* with every capital argument in his *Essay on Demoniacs*. Thus he tells us, and refers to his "Dissertation" for the proof, that "The grand principle which runs through the whole Jewish dispensation, is, that Jehovah is the one true God—that no superior beings whatever, besides himself, are able to controul the laws of nature—that the Christian dispensation proceeds upon the same principle;"—whence he draws the following remarkable inference; "Now, if there be no  
T " sovereign

“ fovereign of nature but God, and no me-  
 “ diator between God and man but Chrift;  
 “ there can be no other fuperior intelligences,  
 “ who have any power over the laws of na-  
 “ ture, or over the human fyftem in parti-  
 “ cular.” It is left for others to judge what  
 truth there is in *this language*, we mean nothing  
 more at prefent, than to affert, that it is  
 Mr. Farmer’s; who, notwithstanding this and  
 many other paffages of the like kind, thus  
 goes on with his complaint: “ I do not re-  
 “ member that Mede, or Sykes, or Lardner,  
 “ were ever charged with, or even fufpected  
 “ of, what you impute to me, and what you  
 “ might, upon the fame grounds, have im-  
 “ puted to them.” In answer to this, it may be  
 faid, with great truth, that “ Mede,” “ Sykes,”  
 and “ Lardner,” all of them, acknowledged the  
 influence of fuperior created fpirits on this  
 earthly globe, and exprefsly afferted the agency  
 of the devil, but our author has never done  
 any fuch thing; there is not, therefore, the  
 fame ground for imputing to them that opi-  
 nion of which Mr. Farmer hath been juftly  
 fufpected. For he reafons, as we have feen,  
 in fuch a manner, that his arguments can have  
 no force, without denying the influence of all  
 created fuperior beings, within the limits of  
 this earthly globe, and frequently, in con-  
 nection

nection with what no one denies, takes an opportunity of asserting this very thing, which no Christian can believe; as for instance, when he says, “ That besides God and “ Christ, there can be no other superior intelligences, who have any power over the “ laws of nature, or *over the human system in “ particular.*” Nay, in opposition to Dr. Sykes, he affirms, that those remarkable words of Peter, “ Christ healed all that were oppressed *by the devil,*” signify nothing more than that he healed all manner of sickness and diseases among the people; nor will he allow that the apostle, in that passage, really intended by the term *devil*, any intelligent nature superior to men. It is beneath this gentleman to think of evading, by little equivocations, the import of his own reasoning and language. If the design of his books hath been misunderstood, and if he really believes an influence from fallen angels over mankind, why then did he not say so, like a person of integrity and candour; which would have been his best defence from the charge of having “ banished the devil out of the world ?” But while he refuses to acknowledge any such thing, himself supports the very suspicion of which he complains; and his severe censures on other persons for understanding his

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books,

books, in a sense which he will not disown, have the appearance of dissingenuous conduct.

§ 10. But after all, if Mr. Farmer should at any future time assert, (what we think to be scarcely possible) “ that he did really believe, while he wrote his *Dissertation on Miracles*, and his *Essay on Demoniacs*, that there are superior created intelligences both good and evil, which operate within the limits of the human system,” his “ Essay” will become a mere hypothesis, and all his arguments against dæmoniacal possessions must fall to the ground, as totally useless ; since no one imputes those effects to deceased persons : they are ascribed to beings originally superior to the nature of man, whose operation, within the limits of the human system, will, in this case, be acknowledged by himself. Nor do we suppose, that possessions are miracles ; by no means : the Scriptures never speak of them as such : common occurrences cannot be attributed to a miraculous power, by whatever means they may be brought to pass. Now, he hath not even attempted to prove, that although superior spirits do operate within the limits of the human system, they are yet not capable of producing any of those

those ordinary effects which we observe in the world; or that they never operate upon mankind in a manner imperceptible by the human senses: hence then it clearly follows, according to this supposition of Mr. Farmer's opinion, that the chief article to be proved, in this controversy, is never once mentioned; while we are amused with learned disquisitions, concerning various articles which are nothing at all to the purpose. On the other hand, if, agreeably with the principles of the "Dissertation," to which we are constantly referred in the "Essay," Mr. Farmer really believes, that there are no superior created intelligences, which ever did or can operate within the limits of the human system, and on this supposition grounds all his reasoning against dæmoniacal possessions, then the whole of his two volumes must be considered as a calm and direct contradiction to the language of Scripture, concerning the agency both of good and evil angels, the entrance of sin and death, and the design of our Lord's appearance in the world, which was to "destroy the works of the devil;" and all that he hath written concerning angels and dæmons, in this case, can be viewed in no other light, than as an attempt to conceal the opposition of his doctrines to the principles of revelation, while we are en-

tertained with cogent reasoning in defence of what no one denies, and with glowing arguments in opposition to what was never believed. But the decision of this point is left for his future determination.

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## C H A P. VII.

*The Scripture Doctrine concerning Angels both good and evil, and their agency within the human System, briefly examined and stated; together with the consequences of their Influence.*

§ 1. **W**E shall now proceed to examine Mr. Farmer's interpretation of those passages of Scripture, which relate to "the ministry of angels;" and then endeavour to point out some facts, which ascertain the interposition of superior beings, grounded on such an evidence as we think can never be overturned, so long as the truth of Christianity is acknowledged. But before we enter upon this part of our subject, it will be necessary to obviate some prejudices that have been unjustly raised against those persons who

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believe

believe the influence of evil spirits. “ With  
 “ regard to Christians,” says our author,  
 “ it is in words, chiefly, that many of them  
 “ differ from the ancient Pagans, who deified  
 “ the supposed principle of evil. If they  
 “ refuse the devil the name of God, they go  
 “ very far in allowing him the attributes and  
 “ prerogatives of God-head. They conceive  
 “ of him as a kind of omnipresent and om-  
 “ niscient spirit, and ascribe to him such a  
 “ dominion over the human race as can be-  
 “ long to none but the sovereign of the uni-  
 “ verse. To the devil they ascribe frosts,  
 “ and tempests, and infectious air, blights  
 “ upon the fruits of the earth, the diseases of  
 “ cattle, the disasters and distempers of men’s  
 “ bodies, phrensy and the alienation of their  
 “ minds, and the power of inflicting even  
 “ cruel deaths.” We think it not worth  
 while to point out all the very exceptionable  
 particulars both expressed and implied in this  
 paragraph, yet perhaps the following brief  
 answer may not be improper: “ That the  
 “ greatest part of the ancient Heathens never  
 “ deified the supposed principle of evil, and  
 “ that this charge could at no time belong to  
 “ *many* of the Christian name, never to such

<sup>a</sup> Farm. on Mir. p. 103—107.

“ as acknowledged the authority either of the  
 “ Old or New Testament: That those Christians  
 “ in general, who have asserted an influence  
 “ from the devil over mankind, never al-  
 “ lowed him either the *attributes* or *preroga-*  
 “ *tives* of God-head; they have neither con-  
 “ ceived of him as a kind of *omniscient* and  
 “ *omnipresent* spirit, nor ascribed to him a *do-*  
 “ *minion* over the human race, far less such a  
 “ one, *as can belong to none but the sovereign of*  
 “ *the universe*; nor have they put the ele-  
 “ ments, together with the fruits of the earth,  
 “ and the diseases of animals, into his power.”

Truth obliges us to consider both the above  
 and the following representation as equally  
 uncandid. “ In a word, if we entertain  
 “ just and honourable sentiments of the  
 “ constitution of the universe, and its all-  
 “ wise and benevolent author, can we believe  
 “ that he has subjected us to the pleasure and  
 “ disposal of superior beings, many of whom  
 “ are supposed to be as capricious and male-  
 “ volent as they are powerful? Has God  
 “ put our very life, and the whole happiness  
 “ of it, into such hands? This some main-  
 “ tain he has done; and this he must have  
 “ done, if he has granted them the power of  
 “ working miracles at pleasure: an opinion  
 “ which cannot fail to rivet Heathens in their



“ idolatry, and Christians in the most detest-  
 “ table superstitions.” To these horrid charges  
 we humbly submit the following answer:  
 “ That we do entertain the most honour-  
 “ able and exalted sentiments of the constitu-  
 “ tion of the universe, and of its all wise and  
 “ benevolent author ; that we do not know of  
 “ any Christians, who consider God as having  
 “ subjected men to the *pleasure* and *disposal* of  
 “ superior beings both capricious and malevo-  
 “ lent, and as having put our *very life*, and the  
 “ *whole happiness of it*, into such hands ; nay,  
 “ we firmly believe, that every one who truly  
 “ fears God, so far from maintaining such  
 “ things as these, cannot even think of them  
 “ without horror ; and that the Divine Being  
 “ never did grant to any spirits, much less to  
 “ evil ones, the power of working miracles at  
 “ pleasure.” Such injurious and unsupported  
 assertions as these, by no means indicate a  
 benevolent and candid mind. We are, in-  
 deed, told by one, who could not but know  
 the truth of what he said, in this case, “ that  
 “ controversial writers, instead of answering  
 “ the arguments of their opponents, too  
 “ often strive to render their persons odious  
 “ by misrepresentation and calumny<sup>b</sup>,” but

<sup>b</sup> Farm. Letter to Worthing. p. 5.

we never had before more decisive evidences of the fact.

§ 2. The sacred writers expressly assert the existence and influence of created intelligent natures, both good and evil, superior to men, yet the above-mentioned author never acknowledges this, but always takes care to avoid it, by using either doubtful or evasive terms ; and there is great reason to believe, that he considers God as having never used the agency of superior intelligent beings of any kind, in the administration of his providence among men. How far such an opinion coincides with the general faith of the world, in all ages, concerning this subject, is not for us to determine ; but it cannot well be reconciled with the language of the Holy Scriptures. He confesseth, indeed, that frequent mention is made of “angels,” either as the instruments or symbols of an extraordinary providence, and considers the words of our Lord to Nathaniel in a figurative sense, “Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man ;\*” which passage he thus explains, “That Christ here foretels his miracles, and not the visible ascent and descent

\* John i. last.

“ of angels upon him during his ministry, is  
 “ evident from hence, that the prophecy was  
 “ not accomplished in this latter sense of it.”  
 Any one, that can read, hath it in his power  
 to contradict such assertions. Angels appeared  
 and ministered to our Lord in the desert, in his  
 agony, at his resurrection, and ascension into  
 heaven; and often visibly interposed for the  
 aid of the apostles. But although it is here  
 acknowledged, that mention is made of angels  
 as *instruments*, as well as symbols of an extraor-  
 dinary providence; yet we are not hereby au-  
 thorized to apply this concession to superior  
*intelligent* beings; because our Author thus  
 explaineth himself: “ The Psalmist, when ce-  
 “ lebrating the empire of God over the ma-  
 “ terial world, says, *He maketh the winds his*  
 “ *angels or messengers, and lightnings his mini-*  
 “ *sters. For fire and hail, snow and vapour,*  
 “ *and stormy winds fulfil God’s word.*” And  
 then we are told, that “ many learned writers  
 “ think *the angel of the Lord smiting Herod*, is  
 “ explained in the text itself of an *extraordi-*  
 “ *nary distemper* inflicted by God, Acts xii. 23;”  
 that “ *God’s sending an angel to Jerusalem*  
 “ *to destroy it,*” seems only another form of ex-  
 pression for “ *his sending a pestilence upon Israel;*”  
 and that “ the Psalmist explains *the thun-*

<sup>c</sup> Farm. on Mir. p. 147. Note <sup>a</sup>.

“ *der,*

“ *der, and hail, and fire*, which came upon the  
 “ *Egyptians*, by God’s *sending evil angels among*  
 “ *them.*” To which things the following  
 singular passage is added. “ On the other  
 “ hand, it may be alledged that the sacred  
 “ writers seem to have thought that God ad-  
 “ ministered *a particular providence* by the in-  
 “ strumentality of his angels; and consequently  
 “ in describing the effects of a special divine in-  
 “ terposition, would very naturally make men-  
 “ tion of the agency of those ministring spirits,  
 “ much in the same manner as is done in the  
 “ passages here cited \*.” We now beg leave,  
 in our turn, to say, “ On the other hand, *it is al-*  
 “ ledged that the sacred writers *actually* thought  
 “ that God administered *a particular providence*  
 “ by the instrumentality of his angels, and con-  
 “ sequently *did* very naturally make mention  
 “ of the agency of those ministring spirits in a  
 “ manner *very different* from what is done in the  
 “ passages here cited ;” and this we think will  
 appear obvious by a *more faithful* quotation of  
 the above-mentioned places of Scripture.

§ 3. “ The Psalmist,” after he had set forth  
 the power and majesty of God in the for-  
 mation of those things which are described  
 under the name of *the heavens*, before he

\* Farm. on Mir. p. 149, 150. Note f.

passes to the creation of the earth, celebrates the wisdom of Divine Providence in employing angels, as his servants for the performance of his will, "Who maketh his  
 " angels spirits, and his ministers a flaming  
 " fire : Who laid the foundations of the  
 " earth, that it should not be removed for  
 " ever. Thou coveredst it with the deep "—." Is it likely, that the Psalmist would take notice of winds and tempests, and their use in the earth, before he had mentioned the creation of the earth itself? But we have the express testimony of the apostle, concerning the sense of this passage, "When he bringeth in the  
 " first begotten into the world, he saith,  
 " " And let all the angels of God worship  
 " " him : " And of the angels, he saith,  
 " " Who maketh his angels spirits, and his  
 " " ministers a flaming fire " . " " In order to evade the force of these words, it is added,  
 " Nor is it certain that these words, Heb. i. 7.  
 " are applied to intelligent beings ; as the  
 " apostle seems to have had no other view in  
 " citing them, than to observe, that the very  
 " name of *angels* (however applied) imported  
 " *ministry* and *subjection* ; whereas that of *Son*  
 " implied *authority* and *dominion* \*." Conjectures and sceptical terms are not sufficient

\* Psal. civ. 4—6.

\* Heb. i. 6, 7.

\* Farm. on Mir. p. 149. Note c.

here to obscure the light of divine truth, since it is the *professed* intention of the sacred penman to shew the *superior excellence* of Christ, *Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.* But what comparison can there be in this respect between “the Son of God” and “winds and tempests?” Even the souls of men are *better* than they. Religious “worship” and adoration is enjoined upon the angels here mentioned, but the same phrase is never applied to the inanimate parts of nature. Angels also, in this place, are called “ministers,” or public officers, whose service must be regulated by certain laws and ordinances, which themselves are supposed to understand and observe as the rules of their conduct. This is the import, both of the word made use of by the Psalmist, and of the term introduced by the apostle. In no other sense, can the angels be justly styled “ministers,” and “ministering spirits ;” as is evident from the constant application of the same terms to the Levites of every rank, to all sorts of officers both under the Jewish and Christian dispensation, and even to our Lord himself, as “the minister of the “sanctuary and true tabernacle\*.” But where is this title ever given to inanimate things?

\* Heb, viii, 2.

We cannot dismiss this passage, without pointing out the application which the sacred writer himself makes of all that is here advanced ; this will, if possible, render it still more obvious, that by “ angels” we are here to understand intelligent beings. “ For,” says he, “ if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, “ and every transgression and disobedience “ received a just recompence of reward ; how “ shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation, which began to be spoken by the “ Lord f—?”

§ 4. In “ the hundred and forty-eighth Psalm” the sacred penman calls upon every part of the universe to celebrate God, and proceeds in the most exact manner. “ Praise ye the Lord “ from the heavens ; praise him in the heights ; “ praise ye him all his angels ; praise ye him “ all his hosts :” and then, after calling upon “ the sun and moon, and all stars of light,” and shewing their original and duration, he thus goes on, “ Praise the Lord from the earth ; “ ye whales, and all deeps ; fire and hail, “ snow and vapours, stormy wind, fulfilling “ his word \*.” Here, every circumstance of order, with respect to the different ranks of beings, as well as the most express language,

f Heb. ii. 2; 3.      \* Ver. 1—8.

prove to men of the lowest capacity, that “ the  
 “ angels of God” are clearly distinguished from  
 “ fire and hail, snow and vapours, and stormy  
 “ wind fulfilling his word.” As to the case of  
 “ Herod,” it will be sufficient for the present to  
 observe, that this writer hath not been able to  
 point out one passage in the New Testa-  
 ment, in which the phrase *angel of the Lord*  
 is put for any thing besides an intelligent be-  
 ing. Concerning “ the pestilence upon Israel,”  
 and “ the angel sent to destroy Jerusalem,” we  
 have the following plain account in the Scrip-  
 tures, “ So the Lord sent pestilence upon  
 “ Israel ; and there fell of Israel seventy  
 “ thousand men : and God sent an angel unto  
 “ Jerusalem to destroy it : and as he was  
 “ destroying, the Lord beheld, and he re-  
 “ pented him of the evil, and said to the an-  
 “ gel that destroyed, “ It is enough, stay  
 “ “ now thine hand.” And the angel of the  
 “ Lord stood by the threshing-floor of Or-  
 “ nan the Jebusite. And David lift up his  
 “ eyes, and saw the angel of the Lord stand  
 “ between the earth and the heaven, having a  
 “ drawn sword in his hand stretched out over  
 “ Jerusalem. Then David and the elders of  
 “ Israel fell upon their faces \*.” We leave the

\* 1 Chron. xxi. 14—16.

meaning



meaning and design of this passage to the consideration of every unprejudiced mind. The last of the above-mentioned quotations runs thus, "We read, Exodus ix. 23, 24, that the Lord  
 " *sent upon the Egyptians thunder, and hail, and*  
 " *fire*: and the Psalmist speaking of these judgments, says, *God sent evil angels among them*,  
 " Psal. 48, 49\*." To this assertion the words of the sacred penman are a sufficient answer, "He  
 " sent divers sorts of flies among them.—and  
 " frogs, which destroyed them: He gave also  
 " their encrease unto the caterpillar, and their  
 " labour unto the locust: He destroyed their  
 " vines with hail, and their sycamore-trees  
 " with frost: He gave up their cattle also  
 " to the hail, and their flocks to hot thunderbolts: He cast upon them the fierceness of his anger, wrath, and indignation,  
 " and trouble, by sending evil angels <sup>b</sup>."—  
 He that can quote passages of Scripture, in the manner of our author, may prove whatever he pleases from the word of God.

§ 5. We shall now, out of the many instances left on sacred record, select the following historical facts, not unworthy this gentleman's notice: he may call them by

\* On Mir. p. 150, Note °.    <sup>b</sup> Psal. lxxviii. 45, &c.

what name he pleases, but they never can be reconciled with his principles of reasoning, and too frequent assertions, concerning the inability of superior created beings to produce any effects on this earthly globe. The words of the inspired writers shall be given without any comment ; they are worth a thousand arguments on this subject, and undoubtedly afford us the most authentic account that we can have of their own real opinion. “ Whiles I was speaking,” says the prophet Daniel, “ and praying, and confessing,—  
 “ and presenting my supplication before the  
 “ Lord my God—yea, whiles I was speaking  
 “ in prayer, even the mighty Gabriel, whom  
 “ I had seen in the vision at the beginning,  
 “ being caused to fly swiftly, touched me,—  
 “ and talked with me, and said <sup>1</sup>.—” —The evangelist Luke, on three different occasions, thus expresseth himself: “ And there appeared—  
 “ an angel of the Lord, standing on the right  
 “ side of the altar of incense—and the angel  
 “ said unto him, “ Fear not Zacharias”—  
 “ And the angel answering, said unto him,  
 “ “ I am Gabriel, that just this instant  
 “ “ stood in the presence of God, and am  
 “ “ sent to speak unto thee, and to shew  
 “ “ thee these glad tidings.”” — Again :

<sup>1</sup> Dan. ix. 20, 21, 22.

“ The angel Gabriel was sent from God;  
 “ unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, to a  
 “ virgin——and the angel came in and said  
 “ unto her”——The message is given at large  
 by the evangelist. Concerning the shepherds  
 who were keeping their flock “ in the same  
 “ country,” at the time of the birth of  
 Christ, it is said, “ And lo ! an angel of  
 “ the Lord came upon them—and the angel  
 “ said unto them, “ Fear not : for, behold, I  
 ““ bring you good tidings of great joy !——”  
 “ And suddenly there was with the angel a  
 “ multitude of the heavenly host, praising God,  
 “ and saying, “ Glory to God in the highest.”—  
 “ As soon as the angels were gone away from  
 “ them into heaven, the shepherds said <sup>k</sup>”——  
 Concerning the resurrection of Christ, the sa-  
 cred historian thus writes, “ An angel of the  
 “ Lord descended from heaven, and came  
 “ and rolled back the stone from the door,  
 “ and sat upon it. His countenance was  
 “ like lightning, and his raiment white as  
 “ snow : and for fear of him the keepers did  
 “ shake, and became as dead men. And the  
 “ angel answered and said unto the women,  
 ““ Fear not ye <sup>l</sup>.””——The apostles are said  
 to have been released from confinement in the

<sup>k</sup> Luke, i. 11. 13. 19. 26. and ii. 9—15.

<sup>l</sup> Matth. xxviii. 2—5.

following manner, "But an angel of the  
 " Lord by night opened the prison doors,  
 " and brought them forth, and said, " Go,  
 " " stand, and speak in the temple to the peo-  
 " " ple all the words of this life <sup>m</sup>." "—The  
 remarkable deliverance of Peter is thus related:  
 —" Peter was sleeping between two soldiers,  
 " bound with two chains; and the keepers  
 " before the door kept the prison. And be-  
 " hold, an angel of the Lord came upon  
 " him, and a light shined in the prison;  
 " and he smote Peter on the side, and raised  
 " him up, saying, " Arise up quickly;" and  
 " his chains fell off from his hands: and  
 " the angel said unto him, " Gird thy-  
 " " self, and bind on thy sandals." And so  
 " he did: and he saith unto him, " Cast  
 " " thy garment about thee and follow me."  
 " And he went out and followed him, and  
 " wist not that it was true which was done by  
 " the angel; but he thought he saw a vision.  
 " —They went out, and passed on through  
 " one street, and forthwith the angel depart-  
 " ed from him <sup>n</sup>." Agreeably with these facts,  
 the sacred penman lays down the following ge-  
 neral doctrine, " That all angels are ministering  
 " spirits, sent forth to minister for those who  
 " shall be heirs of salvation<sup>o</sup>;" although he doth

<sup>m</sup> Acts v. 19, 20. <sup>n</sup> Ibid. xii. 6—10. <sup>o</sup> Heb. i. 14.

not say, that their services shall always be performed in as conspicuous a manner as in the foregoing instances; so that no room is left for the expectation of miracles. The law was given by the ministry of angels, and by them were performed those astonishing effects which attended its promulgation. This is evident both from the Old and New Testament. The Jews themselves frequently boasted of the fact. Stephen spake of it as an acknowledged truth, when he said, that their Fathers “received the law by the disposition of angels<sup>p</sup> ;” and the apostle Paul declares, that “it was ordained by angels\*.” That was originally as much from God as the Gospel, for he is the author of both; accordingly the comparison, which is drawn in the above-mentioned passage to the Hebrews, does not relate to the author of the Law and Gospel, but to the different kinds of ministry that attended the publication of each; the one was the word delivered by angels, the other was the great salvation spoken by the Lord, who hath obtained a more excellent name than they. Angels caused those articulate voices by which the law was conveyed to the ears of the people; hence it is styled “the word *spoken* or *pronounced* by an-

<sup>p</sup> Acts vii. 53.<sup>\*</sup> Gal. iii. 19.

“ gels \*;” which remaineth in our hands to this very day. With what propriety then can it be said by a Christian divine, that no effects of superior created spirits are seen, or ever were seen, on this earthly globe? It is hoped that Mr. Farmer will shew why we ought to reject the obvious sense of these quotations, before he proceeds to increase the severe censures passed on those who cannot receive his opinion.

§ 6. The fall of certain angels into sin and rebellion against their maker, together with their subsequent influence over mankind, is expressly asserted in the Scriptures. “ God  
 “ spared not the angels that sinned, but cast  
 “ them down into Tartarus, and delivered  
 “ them into chains of darkness, to be re-  
 “ served unto judgment.” And again, “ The  
 “ angels which kept not their first estate, but  
 “ left their own habitation, he hath reserved  
 “ in everlasting chains under darkness, unto  
 “ the judgment of the great day.” One would imagine, that no testimony could be more direct and full concerning the apostacy of intelligent beings superior to men, than

\* Heb. ii. 2.      † Farm. on Mir. p. 82. 142, 143.

‡ 2 Pet. ii. 4.      Jude ver. 6.

what is here given. Yet even this is considered as a doubtful point; for thus Mr. Farmer speaks of “the devil and his angels. “It is generally supposed, that these wicked “spirits were originally inhabitants of the “celestial regions, and equal in rank and “dignity with those who preserved their innocence. Now supposing this to be the “case;”—Again: “If Peter and Jude “are here speaking of superior spirits:”—And in his *Essay on Demoniacs*, he says, “The “Greek word, from whence comes the English name, *Devil*, when used in the singular “number in the New Testament, is generally “supposed to refer to one particular evil spirit, the chief of the fallen angels:—” What inference can we fairly draw from such sceptical language, unless the following, “That “the fall of superior spirits into sin; their former residence in heaven; and the application of the name, *Devil*, to their head, “are *supposed* facts, the truth of which is “by no means evident?” However, be that as it may, our Lord speaks with great clearness concerning this matter, he says, “The “devil—abode not in the truth, therefore “truth is not in him: when he speaketh a

† On Mir. p. 151, 152.

‘ On Dem. p. 12.

“ lie, he speaketh from things proper to himself, because he is a liar, and the father of it.” The apostle Peter, under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, in allusion to some ancient traditions, which are also taken notice of by Jude, says, “ That God cast the sinning angels down into Tartarus;” that is, into the dark air which surrounds the earth. This idea of “ Tartarus” differs not very much from that received among the earliest Greeks; which seems, indeed, to have been originally borrowed from some authentic traditions, though, like many other truths that fell in their way, corrupted. They placed “ Tartarus” near those extremities of the earth and sky, where, according to them, the sun never shines, and make it the abode of those dæmons, which, at the commencement of the world, were cast out of heaven by Jupiter\*. But it was not the design of the apostle to give his sanction to Heathen fables, wherein the truth of God is so often abused; he intended nothing more than to shew, that the angels which sinned were cast down from the mansions of light and blessedness, into the lower regions which surround the earth; and his account of

\* John viii. 44.

† Hom. Iliad. viii. ver. 480. Hes. Theog. ver. 729, &c.  
this



this matter well agrees with other parts of the sacred writings.

§ 7. We are told by our author, that whatever place “Tartarus” refers to, the fallen angels “can have no *dominion* there; it is “not their *kingdom*, but their *prison*, their “*constant* and *perpetual* prison.” And then he immediately adds: “how inconsistent is “this representation of their case, with their “sharing with God the empire of the world, “and controuling the laws of nature and “Providence? Nor does the Scripture on “any occasion contradict this representa- “tion—.” We do not believe, that there are any Christian writers, who represent fallen angels as “sharing with God the empire of the “world;” or, as capable of “controuling the “laws of nature and Providence:” these insinuations, therefore, so often repeated, can be considered in no other light, than as instances of misrepresentation, which become the more aggravated, on account of their frequency. It is not easy to discover what ideas this writer had under the terms *dominion*, *kingdom*, and *prison*, however, the following is given as a sufficient answer to the above-quoted para-

<sup>w</sup> On Mir. p. 153.

graph :

graph : “ Whatever place Tartarus refers to,  
 “ the fallen angels have *no dominion* there ; it  
 “ is no where spoken of as *their kingdom* ; nor  
 “ is it ever once called, in the Scriptures,  
 “ their *prison*, far less their *constant* and *per-*  
 “ *petual* prison. The sacred penmen never  
 “ represent superior spirits as confined within  
 “ walls and dungeons ; nor do they once in-  
 “ timately, that such beings are to be brought  
 “ forth to an ignominious *execution*.” These  
 terms, *reserved in everlasting chains*, have al-  
 ways been understood as metaphorical ; and  
 since we cannot conceive of spirits as bound  
 in the manner of human bodies, some have  
 thought the *irresistible power*, and *immutable*  
*will*, of God as their righteous governor and  
 judge, to be the *eternal chains* by which the  
 sinning angels are kept to the judgment-day :  
 and, indeed, these terms were used by the  
 most ancient Greek writers, as figurative of  
 that power and will which cannot be over-  
 come \*. The word, *darkness*, hath been in-  
 terpreted, as denoting only that condition of  
 life which is full of misery and horror ; for  
 so the term is applied, in other parts of  
 Scripture, and not as referring to any par-  
 ticular place of confinement. It hath also

\* Hom. Iliad. viii. ver. 19, and xv. ver. 19.

been

been supposed, that this phrase was designed to represent the dark air, or the regions which surround the earth, as the appointed limits, beyond which those wicked spirits are not allowed to pass<sup>7</sup>. Every one, without deciding on these articles, will feel the absurdity of understanding the metaphorical language of "Peter" and "Jude" in a literal way. Whatever those limits be, within which fallen angels are kept to the judgment-day, they may yet be capable of doing great mischief; and indeed the repeated assertions of holy writ, as well as the present condition of mankind, afford us too many evidences both of the inclination and ability of those beings, in this respect: nevertheless, we do not look upon the exercise of their power, any more than the destructive tyranny of a Nero, to be inconsistent with the unerring Providence and perfect government of Almighty God. They who believe the power of fallen angels to affect human nature, are under no more obligations to reconcile the influence and wickedness of any creature with the rectitude and perfection of the divine government, than other men who profess to believe the existence of God. For, as the learned Sherlock well observes, "No body is

<sup>7</sup> Poli Synop. in Pet. &c.

" exempt

“ exempt in this case, but the Atheist ; and  
 “ his privilege comes from hence, that he  
 “ has no account to give of any thing, for  
 “ all difficulties are alike upon his scheme<sup>a</sup>.”

§ 8. “ God created man in his own image,  
 “ in the image of God created he him<sup>a</sup>.”  
 This “ image,” as we are assured, included in  
 it “ knowledge, righteousness, and true holi-  
 “ ness<sup>b</sup> ;” and thus Solomon evidently under-  
 stood it, when he said, “ Lo, this only have I  
 “ found, that God created man upright<sup>c</sup>.”  
 The question, then, is this, “ How came he to  
 “ be otherwise?” The entrance of moral evil  
 into the world is neither a jest nor a fable.  
 We cannot suppose, that the sacred penmen  
 would either seek to amuse or perplex us,  
 in describing so awful an event. The account  
 which Moses gives of the fall, is well known.  
 “ Now the serpent was more subtil than any  
 “ beast of the field, which the Lord God  
 “ had made : and he said unto the woman,  
 “ Yea, hath God said, ye shall not eat of  
 “ every tree of the garden?”—And again,  
 “ The serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall  
 “ not surely die ; for God doth know, that

<sup>a</sup> On Proph. 2 Dissert.    <sup>b</sup> Eph. iv. 24. Coloss. iii. 10.

<sup>c</sup> Gen. i. 27.

<sup>c</sup> Eccles. vii, 29.

“ in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes  
 “ shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods,  
 “ knowing good and evil \*.”—The narration  
 itself will not allow us to suppose, that no-  
 thing more was here intended than a creep-  
 ing animal. Moses never meant, that we  
 should ascribe not only speech and reason to  
 a beast of the field, but also a direct attack  
 upon the honour of God, and the propriety  
 and justice of his holy commandments. That  
 would be to destroy all distinctions, and make  
 the serpent to be what it really is not. We  
 must, therefore, grant, that Moses describes  
 in the serpent the artifice of the chief of the  
 apostate angels, who first began a revolt from  
 God, broke the law of his creation, and  
 made use of the serpent in seducing man-  
 kind. We might urge many strong argu-  
 ments, derived from the nature of the sentence,  
 which was passed, and the different punishments  
 denounced on each party concerned, but we  
 have the express testimony of the apostles in  
 support of the interpretation here given; for  
 thus they explain themselves.—“ That old  
 “ serpent, called the devil, and Satan, which  
 “ deceiveth the whole world <sup>d</sup>.” It is accord-  
 ingly said, that “ the devil sinneth from the

\* Gen. iii. 1. 4, 5.

<sup>d</sup> Rev. xii. 9.

“beginning<sup>•</sup>,” and he is called “the tempter,” “the deceiver,” “the destroyer\*.” That sin, to the committing of which he deluded the first man, brought moral depravity, and death, upon the whole human race: hence it is said, that “he who committeth sin is of the devil;” that “the imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth;” that “by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed on all men, for that all have sinned;” the devil is expressly styled, *him that had the power of death*<sup>f</sup>. When the serpent had, by his artifice and subtilty, beguiled man into sin, death must follow, in consequence of the righteous judgment of God, and the prior denunciation of his law. We see the reason, then, why the devil is said in the Scriptures, to “have the power of death;” for if he could introduce “sin, the wages of which is death†,” he had, beyond all doubt, the power of bringing in death, and so far as sin and death prevail, he must be considered as the author of both. This doctrine is clearly supported by our Lord himself. The Jews, while they

• 1 John iii. 8.

<sup>f</sup> Ibid. Gen. viii. 21. Rom. v. 12. Heb. ii. 14.

• Matt. iv. 1—12. 1 Thess. iii. 5. Rev. xii. 9. Ibid. ix. 11. † Rom. vi. last.

opposed the revealed will of God, sought to kill Jesus; the devil, while he abused the word of God, attempted the destruction of mankind; Christ, therefore, justly compared the conduct of the one, with the works of the other. “—Ye seek to kill me, because  
 “ my word hath no place in you—But now  
 “ ye seek to kill me, a man who have told  
 “ you the truth, which I have heard of  
 “ God—Ye are of your father the devil, and  
 “ the lusts of your father ye will do: he was  
 “ a murderer from the beginning, and abode  
 “ not in the truth, therefore truth is not in  
 “ him: when he speaketh a lie, he speaketh  
 “ of his own: for he is a liar, and the father  
 “ of it &c.” The devil did not, indeed, seek with open violence to put an end to the life of Adam, but death was what he had in view, when he invented a lie, and first tempted man to sin: he is, therefore, said to be an homicide and “ murderer from the beginning,” as he intended the destruction of human nature. Sin and death being thus introduced, and all mankind under the guilt of the one, and doomed by a righteous sentence to undergo the other, the devil became both their leader and chief in rebellion, and the author of that unhappy state into which the whole is

“ John, chap. viii. 37. 40. 44.

now brought. It was neither the contrivance nor work of the blessed God: the Scriptures never represent him as introducing sin, nor as causing death; but they always speak of God as hating wickedness, and seeking to deliver men from its consequences; through Jesus Christ, who came “to destroy” “the works of the devil.” We have never yet seen a better or more rational account of the entrance of sin and death into this world, and of the present condition of human nature, than what is given in the Scriptures. God is not there charged with any evil; the demerit and danger of sin are set in a clear and striking light; the divine rectitude is not obscured in the least; nor is the devil represented in all this, “as a kind of omniscient” “and omnipotent spirit,”—“sharing with God” “the empire of the world:” on the contrary, he is justly described as a rebel, as a murderer, and the father of all wickedness, whose devices shall be overthrown, and whose works shall be punished.

§ 9. We are indeed told, with no small degree of confidence, that “whatever opinion we form concerning the malignant influence of fallen angels upon the morals and happiness of mankind, hath no relation



“tion at all to the present question” about dæmoniacal possessions, “which concerns “only the agency of a different order of “beings, that of human spirits.” This gentleman well knew, and hath also confessed, that they who believe the reality of dæmoniacal possessions attribute them to fallen angels, and not to human spirits; in the estimation of such persons, therefore, the subject is intimately connected with the malignant influence of fallen angels on the *happiness* of mankind; and himself acknowledgeth, that the design of his *Essay on the Dæmoniacks of the New Testament* was, to reconcile their case with the principles of his *Dissertation on Miracles*<sup>1</sup>, where he maintains the inability of superior created beings to produce such effects, within the limits of the human system, and where also, as we have seen, he unjustly chargeth Christians with ascribing to the devil such a dominion over the human race as can belong to none but the Sovereign of the universe. The whole of what he hath offered to prove, that by dæmons we are to understand the souls of departed men can only be considered as an attempt to reconcile the language of the Gospel with his own

<sup>h</sup> Farm. on Dem. p. 147.

<sup>i</sup> Ibid. p. 1. See also above, chap. vi. § 1.

particular opinion, advanced in a former publication ; it doth not at all affect the *ground* of their sentiments, who ascribe possessions to the agency of superior beings. His peremptory decision, therefore, on so capital a point, not only without any kind of proof, but also in a direct contradiction to the professed design of his own book, is rather too magisterial ! We do, with chearfulness, pay him all respect, as a person of learning, but, as an inconsistent dogmatist, we owe him none. And besides, it is not in this writer's power to separate an influence over the morals of men from the human body ; this hath been too often proved to the world, by the pernicious effects of vice, which hath procured the slaughter of millions. It is expressly said, that “ the devil put it into the heart of Judas “ Iscariot, the son of Simon, to betray ” his master \*, that “ Satan entered into him,” — “ and ” that “ he ” then “ went and communed with the “ chief priests—how he might betray ” Jesus † : nor is this spoken of as a miracle, yet the event terminated in the death, both of the betrayed who was innocent and free from guile, and also of the traitor himself. We might alledge other instances, were it needful. But our author has been very careful never to allow

\* John xiii. 2.

† Luke xxii. 3, 4.

any influence from fallen angels, either upon the *morals* or *happiness* of mankind. From that sin, of which the devil was the first author, all sorts of calamities arise, and they are very properly numbered among *his works*. Sorrow, diseases, and death, entered by sin, with sin, therefore, came in the devil's power, and while sin reigns over men, his influence continueth; without sin, he could have no more to do on earth, than he hath to do in heaven, and sufferings could no more be known in this world, than they are now among the blessed<sup>k</sup>: neither those cases, therefore, which, in the Gospel, are called dæmoniacal possessions; nor any other calamities, can, upon the principles of revelation, ever be separated from the malignant influence of fallen angels; upon the *morals* and *happiness* of mankind. But if it be absolutely impossible for superior created beings to affect the human system, we can never justly charge the devil with bringing about the ruin of our nature; nor can we have any very exalted ideas of the "Son of God," while he is represented as destroying the works, and abolishing the power, of one who was never capable of

<sup>k</sup> The whole of this matter is well discussed by the learned Dr. Owen, on Heb. chap. ii.

doing any mischief: the subject, therefore, must affect the whole plan of Revelation.

§ 10. We have seen, if the word of God be true, that fallen angels were not only able to introduce sin into this world, with all its destructive consequences, but that they did actually accomplish it, by inexpressible treachery and wickedness; the effects of their agency, therefore, within the human system, have not only been *seen*, but are *still felt*, by every individual of mankind, even by those who, perhaps, are unwilling to acknowledge their influence. A peremptory denial of this fact, by those who are acquainted with the holy Scriptures, appears to be the same thing with rejecting the principles of Revelation, and disavowing the ground and reason assigned for the Gospel of Christ. For, according to the word of God, fallen angels did actually bring in sin, and thus cause the death of the whole human race; on what principles then can we deny their power to produce any effects within the limits of the human system, without rejecting the Scripture account of the fall, and without affirming, that death was not brought in by them? If those persons deserve the severest censure, who attribute death,

in

in any case, to the power of the devil, what must we think of our Lord, who calls him “ a *man slayer*, and murderer,” and that too “ from the beginning ?” It is certainly incumbent on those gentlemen who load others with so many reproaches for believing dæmoniacal possessions, to give us, in plain language, a direct account of their ideas, concerning the entrance of sin and death into this world, and to let us know, whether they ascribe it to the agency of the devil or not ; for till this is done, those arguments that have been advanced against the received opinion, on this subject, can never be supported. If they do acknowledge that sin and death were brought in by the devil, they attribute to him a greater power than is claimed in the case of possessions ; the whole of that reasoning, therefore, which is derived from the supposed incapacity of fallen angels, to produce such effects, must fall to the ground, and their business will be to prove, if they can, what is in fact an absurdity, that though the devil had power to bring in sin and death, yet he never can have any influence in those things which distress mankind and lead to death, and that, though he was permitted to tempt mankind while innocent,

and betray them into ruin, yet now, since they are become guilty and worthy of punishment, he is not allowed, in any case, either to seduce or hurt. But if they deny the devil to be the author of the present unhappy state of sin and death, or to have any influence in the cause of human miseries, then the controversy is not with any particular set of Christians, but with the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, and with the common notions of mankind, concerning the moral perfections of God, who is *justly* supposed, as we apprehend, neither to have introduced sin, nor caused death. It does therefore appear to us, that those arguments, which have been urged of late, against dæmoniacal possessions, equally affect the principles of natural and revealed religion; and we cannot avoid, on such an occasion, taking notice of those very singular compliments that have been paid, on this subject, to the “Sadducees,” “Epicureans,” and other kindred minds, of ancient date, whose tenets were very unfavourable to religion and good morals<sup>1</sup>, while “Christians” have been loaded with unjust reproaches.

<sup>1</sup> Essay on Dem. p. 136. 155. Dissert. on Mir. p. 531. See also above, chap. iii. § 3.

§ 11. In opposition to that account, which hath been so often justly urged from the Holy Scriptures, concerning the entrance of sin into this world, and the rise of human calamities, the following objections *may*, perhaps, *have been alledged*, “ That the origin of evil, both  
 “ natural and moral, is a subject which hath  
 “ employed, and hitherto perplexed, the greatest philosophers and divines in every age,  
 “ and that some judicious persons will probably be of opinion, that the Mosaic history of the fall, however explained, is not  
 “ a complete solution of it, or that, if it  
 “ hath removed some difficulties, there are  
 “ others remaining.” To this, or to any thing of the like import, if it should be pleaded, the following brief answer may be given, “ That the Mosaic history of the fall  
 “ was never intended as a solution of the *origin* of evil, far less as *a complete one*, nor  
 “ was it ever so urged, that we know of, by  
 “ any Christian divine; none, therefore, but  
 “ either injudicious or uncandid persons will  
 “ represent the subject in this light.” Our business at present is with the following question, “ Will any Christian divine take upon  
 “ him to say, that the account which is delivered to us by the sacred penmen, concerning the introduction of natural and

“ moral evil into *this world*, is not a *just one* ?”

According to the Holy Scriptures, neither human calamities, nor death, nor the evil passions of men, are from the original constitution of nature, but were brought into the world by that sin to which the devil first seduced man. The history of the fall, the previous threatning of God in case of disobedience, and the sentence pronounced on Adam's transgression, together with the consequent alteration in the state of the world, and in the condition of mankind, do all naturally lead us to a source of human calamities very different from the original constitution of nature. That account which is given us in the Bible, concerning the *introduction* of natural and moral evil among men, hath hitherto been received by Christians in general, as authentic; the principles and design of the Gospel every where suppose its truth; there is nothing in it contradictory to human reason, or inconsistent with our natural ideas of the divine perfections, for nothing injurious throughout the whole affair, is attributed to the agency of God. The *origin* of evil is a subject not within the comprehension of the human mind, because we are, at present, destitute of those common principles without which a clear knowledge of that matter cannot be conveyed  
to



to us: if there were a proper medium through which such information could be given, we should undoubtedly perceive, that God was no more the contriver and agent in the first rise of moral evil than he was, according to the Scriptures, in the entrance of sin into this world.

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## C H A P. VIII.

*The Scripture Account of those Cases which are termed Dæmoniacal Possessions; with an Examination of the Cause that hath been lately assigned for such Disorders.*

§ 1. **W**E shall now proceed to examine those particular cases, which in the Gospel are ascribed to the agency of evil spirits, under the name of “dæmons;” and then enquire, whether those writers, who totally reject the idea of such agency, have really assigned a more probable and rational cause for those unhappy instances, than what is expressly mentioned in the New Testament? In discussing these articles, we shall pay no regard to undefined

defined terms, and unmeaning propositions, or to ridiculous tales, urged from the superstitious opinions of idolatrous Gentiles; because our business is only with that account which the Holy Scriptures have given concerning “dæmoniacs.” In stating the first of these articles, we shall, as far as possible, follow the representation given by our opponents themselves. There were some diseases thought to be inflicted by superior beings, which were not considered under the idea of “possessions;” such was the disorder of the woman bowed together for eighteen years<sup>a</sup>, and such was the case of Job. “All the persons spoken of “as possessed, were disordered in their minds. “Epileptics were also numbered among this “class, because they were attended with a “deprivation of the understanding, or loss of “sense, and with the signs of phrenzy. Yet it “does not appear, that the ancients considered “all as possessed, who were disordered in “their understandings, as in the delirium of “a fever, or in phrenzy caused by excess of drinking<sup>b</sup>.” And we by no means assert, that either the apostles, or their countrymen, considered every instance of madness which themselves might attribute to evil spi-

<sup>a</sup> Luke xiii. 11.    <sup>b</sup> Farm. on Dem. p. 88. 107.

rits, as possessions ; nay, perhaps the contrary might be proved were it necessary. But our enquiry relates only to those particular cases, termed “ possessions” in the New Testament ; and in the stating these, we object to all such expressions as the following : “ That the de-  
 “ mons within them were supposed to occupy  
 “ the seat of the human soul, and to per-  
 “ form all its functions in the body.—If de-  
 “ mons can unite themselves to a human  
 “ body in the same manner that the soul is  
 “ united to it by God, so as to govern all its  
 “ organs.—That spirits take possession of  
 “ men’s bodies, and govern their bodily or-  
 “ gans, in as perfect a manner as their own  
 “ souls can do.” Had the author of these sentences bestowed a little more care in giving a fair and just representation of the doctrine concerning “ dæmoniacs,” *as stated in the New Testament*, and reasoned from that language only, he might have saved himself much trouble in collecting needless arguments, and his readers frequent disgust, with uncandid descriptions, drawn from idolatrous and antichristian writers, and injuriously applied to persons who abhor such ideas. We have nothing to do, at present, with any other terms than those of the

‘ Farm. on Dem. p. 117. 250. 406.

apostles ;

apostles; that phrase, every where used in the Gospel on this occasion, is sufficient for us, which signifies no more than to be *held*, *afflicted*, or *grieved*, by a dæmon, or, as it is well expressed in one place by our translators, “My daughter is *grievously vexed* with a devil\*.”

§ 2. We beg leave to enter a caveat against the improper use which may be made of the following inference from Matthew’s application of an ancient prophecy, “Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses†.” “This prophecy,” says Mr. Farmer, “concerning Christ’s *taking our infirmities, and bearing our sicknesses*, was accomplished in part by the cure of demoniacs; and therefore possessions were comprehended under *infirmities* and *sicknesses*, and consequently imply some disorder or distemper in the human frame, from whatever cause it might proceed<sup>d</sup>.” Our author’s conclusion is expressed in terms somewhat vague and indeterminate. But he may be considered as explaining himself in the next paragraph. After quoting a number of texts, in order to shew that the recovery of dæmoniacs is spoken of in the same

\* Matth. xv. 22. † Ibid viii. 16, 17. Isaiah liii. 4.

<sup>d</sup> On Dem. p. 65, 66, 67.

manner,

manner, as the recovery of those who laboured under bodily diseases, he adds, “ In describing the miracle wrought upon demoniacs, the evangelists say indifferently “ Christ expelled the demon, or that he healed “ the demoniac. From hence it appears, that “ a real disorder was cured, whenever Christ “ is represented as ejecting a demon.” *A real disorder was cured!* This is very true: but what kind of a disorder? Was a *bodily* disease cured, *whenever* Christ is represented as ejecting a dæmon? To prove this, is evidently the design of the whole section, and yet when we come to the very point of decision, we are put off with ambiguous terms, which imply nothing more than what was never doubted on either side of the question. This gentleman seems to have been conscious of the fallacy of the above quoted paragraph; for in a reference to it he says, “ It hath been shewn, that on several occasions, the New Testament includes possessions under the general terms, *sicknesses and diseases*; and consequently considers “ them as one particular species of them. “ At other times, it distinguishes possessions “ from diseases in general, in conformity to “ the popular language, which it adopted on “ this

“ this subject—<sup>e</sup>.” But afterwards he resumes again his former inference, and *intimates* that all possessions were *bodily diseases*, and accordingly treated as such; though he carefully avoids using the phrase <sup>f</sup>. Dr. Lardner was also of the same opinion, and affirms, that all demoniacs had some bodily indisposition, “ Nor,” says he, “ does it appear clearly from their history, that there was any thing beside such indisposition <sup>g</sup>.” If this opinion of the Doctor’s had not been agreeable to our author’s own plan, he would have undoubtedly taken notice of it; for on the same page, and just before the last of the above quoted paragraphs, he thus expresseth himself, “ We have now examined all Dr. Lardner’s objections to the account we have given of the Gospel demoniacs. And if *he* (who was so well acquainted with the subject) did not think it liable to any other, we may presume no other can be raised against it <sup>h</sup>.” This is a fine example of the *argumentum ad verecundiam*, with a very skilful reserve of our author’s own pre-eminence on the subject. However, it appears evident, according to the reasons and autho-

<sup>e</sup> On Dem. p. 118, 119.    <sup>f</sup> Ibid. 160—166.

<sup>g</sup> Case of Dem.    <sup>h</sup> On Dem. p. 117, 118.

rities here alledged, that the two following articles must be allowed : first, that none are said to have evil spirits, who were not discomposed in their minds ; next, that *whenever* a dæmon is said to be cast out, a *bodily* disease was cured. We shall not take upon us to shew the consistency of those two articles, but we beg leave to point out another remarkable passage, the truth of which we dare not contradict. Our author, towards the close of his book, after referring to the reason quoted above, why possessions were distinguished from bodily diseases, immediately adds, “ Disorders merely *mental* are of a different nature from those by which *the body* alone is affected<sup>1</sup>.” And, on this principle, he rests the propriety of the above-mentioned distinction. Here then, without contradicting the only authority which is more respectable than Dr. Lardner’s, we may venture the following observation, “ That the sacred writers themselves did not consider all dæmoniacal cases as attended with bodily distempers, though it is clear they looked upon some possessions in this light ; and that they did not distinguish possessions from diseases in general, *only* in conformity to the

<sup>1</sup> On Dem. p. 355.

“ popular language of those times, since a real  
 “ difference in nature is acknowledged, be-  
 “ tween disorders merely mental, and those by  
 “ which the body alone is affected.” It does  
 not appear, that “ the Gadarene dæmoniacs” la-  
 boured under any bodily disease whatever; there  
 is no circumstance mentioned in their history  
 which gives the least intimation of this kind.  
 The evangelists vary their language with the ut-  
 most caution<sup>k</sup>. Luke distinguishes “ those who  
 “ were *vexed* with unclean spirits,” from such  
 as were afflicted with corporeal diseases, and  
 his term, which we render *vexed*, denotes only  
 tumult and hurry of mind, but is not appli-  
 cable to bodily complaints. On other occa-  
 sions, he speaks of evil spirits and bodily in-  
 firmities as united in the same subject. But it  
 can by no means be proved, that the sacred wri-  
 ters ever include “ possessions” under corpo-  
 real diseases ; they, indeed, often speak of the  
 same person as labouring under both at the  
 same time, yet still they carefully distinguish  
 the one from the other. We may therefore  
 safely conclude, that none are called “ dæmo-  
 “ niacs” in the New Testament, unless such  
 as were deprived of the proper use of their  
 senses, and afflicted with madness; and that

<sup>k</sup> Mat. viii. 16. Luke vi. 18.



this is not always said to be attended with some bodily complaint. The most skilful physicians of our own times will freely acknowledge, that there are many instances of madness which do not arise from any known disorder in the human frame. Cases of this kind have been called *original* madness, in distinction from that which accompanies some bodily disease, or accident.

§ 3. We shall next enquire, whether those persons, who deny the influence of evil spirits over the human system, have assigned, for those disorders, called dæmoniacal possessions, a cause more probable and rational in itself, and more consistent with the principles of revelation, than that alledged in the holy Scriptures, and now considered as a vulgar error? Some of the writers, indeed, against the received doctrine on this subject, attempted nothing more than to shew, that what are called dæmoniacal possessions were mere bodily diseases, and that there was no particular agency of superior created beings, in cases of this nature; they never offered to assign the true cause of such like calamities, nor to substitute any other in the room of that which they rejected. This was certainly a very great defect in their hypothesis; but

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they

they knew not how to remove it, without attacking the Scripture account of the origin of moral and natural evil, which, as we apprehend, they had no desire of doing. To have acknowledged, that the devil was not only the remote cause of human sin and misery, but the prime agent in bringing them into the world, would have embarrassed their whole scheme, and admitted an influence which could not fail to intangle all their future arguments. Silence, therefore, on so delicate a point, might, for any thing we can tell, be the greatest prudence. But the most celebrated writer on this subject, by assuring his readers, that besides God and Christ, there can be no superior intelligences, who have any power over the human system, hath freed himself from all these difficulties, and therefore assigns, without scruple, what he looks upon to be the true cause both of dæmoniackal possessions, and *all* other evils to which human nature is subject; his plan, in this particular, we shall now examine, with as much freedom as it was written.

§ 4.—“Whoever,” says Mr. Farmer, “the demons of the ancients were, it hath not hitherto been proved by reason, that the disorders imputed to them cannot proceed

“ceed from natural causes. You say, that  
 “by the sole operation of these causes, you  
 “cannot account for the epilepsy and mad-  
 “ness. What then? Will it necessarily fol-  
 “low from hence, that these disorders pro-  
 “ceed from a cause that is supernatural?”

By no means; neither will it hence follow, that these calamities have *no other source* than the disordered state of the human frame.

But he goes on: “Are you perfectly acquaint-  
 “ed with all the secrets of nature, or with all  
 “her wonderful operations in the human  
 “system? Do not very many of them escape  
 “the most diligent search? Why then do men,  
 “however learned, pronounce with certainty,  
 “that epileptic and maniacal disorders do  
 “not fall within the limits of nature?” It  
 is readily granted, that we have *no* acquaintance  
 with “the *secrets* of nature.” What then? Do  
 not many of “her wonderful operations”—  
 “escape the most diligent search” even of this  
 writer himself? Why then should any person,  
 however learned, pronounce with certainty, that  
 maniacal disorders have no other cause than  
 what is common to all bodily diseases? “We  
 “are,” says he, “subject to *other* disorders  
 “in the common course of nature, or accord-  
 “ing to those fixed rules by which the hu-  
 Y 2 “man

“ man system is governed; why then may  
 “ we not be subject to *these* also in the same  
 “ manner? If we cannot affirm with certainty,  
 “ that they *do* proceed from natural causes;  
 “ neither can you prove, that they *do not*.  
 “ There is, therefore, no evidence from rea-  
 “ son for the reality of possessions <sup>1</sup>.” Is not  
 this some mistake of the printer? Our author  
 surely could not well think of such an inference.  
 Must not the following be the true reading,  
 “ There is, therefore, no evidence from rea-  
 “ son, either *for* or *against* the reality of pos-  
 “ sessions;” for thus it stands, according to  
 the representation of the case, here given?  
 However, it is not usual with gentlemen of  
 learning, to insist upon it, either that any  
 particular notion is false, because certain per-  
 sons cannot demonstrate its truth, or that  
 some other opinion is really true, because  
 those of a contrary mind cannot prove it to be  
 false. We never expected arguments of this  
 kind from one, who hath talked so much  
 against insulting the reason of mankind. We  
 have, indeed, looked for increasing light in  
 the progress of our subject, and have, there-  
 fore, naturally asked, What are we to under-  
 stand by *natural causes* in this paragraph?  
 What is here meant by a cause that is *super-*

<sup>1</sup> On Dem. p. 152, 153.

*natural*? And what are those *fixed rules* by which the human system is governed? Doth the author intend to say, that all disorders, and madness among the rest, naturally arise from the original structure of the human frame, and that *no other* cause is to be assigned? If not, what are those *fixed rules*, by which the human system is governed; when and where were they established, if not at the creation; and how does it appear, that delusion and madness are according to *these* rules? We ought to have been told also, what are the *limits* of nature, and who they are that consider maniacal cases as not falling *within* these limits. In short, it is our misfortune to look upon many of those passages as nothing more than collections of unmeaning terms, which this writer is pleased to dignify with the name of reasoning. But he thus proceeds in a loftier style.

§ 5. “ We have seen, that the reality of  
 “ possessions cannot be demonstrated by rea-  
 “ son, because the disorders imputed to them  
 “ *may proceed* from natural causes; and it can-  
 “ not be proved that they do not. I now add,  
 “ that reason remonstrates against the doctrine  
 “ of possessions, and clearly shews us, that  
 “ the disorders imputed to them *actually do*

“ *proceed* from natural causes. The tempera-  
 “ ment of the body, the texture of the brain,  
 “ the motion of the blood, the excess or  
 “ defect of the animal spirits, the influences  
 “ of air and diet, intenseness of thought,  
 “ violent passions, and sudden frights, will  
 “ disturb or destroy the regular exercise of  
 “ the understanding.” “ Reason” *might*, now  
 with some degree of propriety, *remonstrate*.—  
 But we are, immediately after this, presented  
 with a curious spectacle, which, it seems,  
 had been imprudently omitted, by the most  
 learned writers on dæmoniacs, before our au-  
 thor. It is old Hippocrates, dissecting the  
 head of a goat, “ *whose brain was found to be*  
 “ *overcharged with a rheum of a very bad*  
 “ *smell; a plain proof that the animal was dis-*  
 “ *eased, not possessed by a deity.*” And then,  
 from the whole, is drawn the following de-  
 cisive inference, “ Now, if maniacal and  
 “ epileptical distempers owe their rise to na-  
 “ tural causes; and (so far as reason can  
 “ judge) to these causes only; it is not only  
 “ groundless, but absurd, to ascribe them to  
 “ a supernatural influence<sup>m</sup>.” We are here  
 favoured, not indeed with a logical definition,  
 but rather with a catalogue, of what our author

<sup>m</sup> On Dem. p. 160, 161.

means by *natural causes*, and which, as we conjecture, he looks upon to be those *fixed rules*, whereby the human system is governed. The examples here given may be considered more properly as *effects* than as “causes.” The shape of a tree, the thickness of its bark, the arrangement of its boughs, the rising of its sap, the number of its leaves, and the kind of its fruit, may be termed so many *natural causes*, with as much propriety as “the temperature of the body, the texture of the brain, the motion of the blood, and the excess or defect of the animal spirits.” Nor is our surprise in the least abated, when we find “intenseness of thought, *violent passions*, and sudden frights” numbered among “natural causes !” We never understood before, that the calamities and even moral defects of human nature were to be considered as *natural causes*, and so many pre-established *rules* for the government of mankind. The accidental circumstances here mentioned may frequently be the *occasion* of melancholy or madness, but our enquiry respects the *immediate* “cause” of those delusive perceptions, both of external objects and horrid thoughts, which often attend madness, and which are as much independent of the will of madmen, as the oaths and threatenings of a ruffian are, of the will of an honest,

affrighted traveller. The fracture of a limb, or the bursting of a blood-vessel, with many other things of the like kind, may be the occasions of inexpressible fear and dread, while it is well known, that these are not the immediate causes of such painful and distressing thoughts. Causes, effects, and occasions, are entirely confounded one with another in the above paragraph. Without making any comparison between "*the brain of a goat, overcharged with an offensive rheum,*" and those delusive perceptions that frequently happen to the human species, we shall pursue the arguments further alledged on this part of our subject.

§ 6. " As the several disorders imputed to  
 " possession, proceed from natural causes,  
 " like other disorders allowed not to be pre-  
 " ternatural; so, like these, they yield to  
 " natural remedies, and each of them re-  
 " quires a peculiar process.—But what effect  
 " can medicines and evacuations have upon  
 " the devil, who is conceived to be spiritual  
 " and incorporeal? Why should it be thought,  
 " that the same evil spirit is expelled from the  
 " body of *one* person, by medicines that  
 " would not affect him in the body of *an-*  
 " *other*? Or that he is sometimes driven away  
 " by



“ by hellebore, at other times drawn off by  
 “ a blister? If physicians are able, by such  
 “ various means, to eject him from the human  
 “ body, the devil is subject to man, not  
 “ man to the devil <sup>a</sup>.” It is never intimated  
 in the holy Scriptures, that those disorders  
 which the sacred writers call “ dæmoniacal,”  
 either ever were, or might have been, cured  
 by the skilful use of physic; nor is it once  
 supposed by the evangelists, that the devil “ is  
 “ sometimes driven away by hellebore, or at  
 “ other times drawn off by a blister.” It is not  
 at all to the honour of this writer, to be found,  
 almost in every page, imputing to other men,  
 opinions which never entered into their  
 thoughts. Those cases which have been ascribed  
 to evil spirits are not considered, by those  
 who believe this doctrine, as “ yielding,”—  
 “ like other disorders ”—to natural remedies.”  
 If our author does not as yet know, he certainly  
 ought to be informed, that there are numbers  
 of “ maniacal persons,” and “ epileptics ” too,  
 upon whom the most skilful use of physic is at-  
 tended with no real advantage. To talk of *purg-*  
*ing* the devil, may be thought a very pretty  
 jest; but a disordered mind, throughout life,  
 is no proper subject of mirth. We cannot

<sup>a</sup> Farm. on Dem. p. 163—166.

discover

discover any thing that bears the least resemblance either to wit or argument, in the conclusion, which is here drawn from the supposed efficacy of medicine, in this case, “ If physicians are able, by such various means, to eject him from the human body, the devil is subject to man, not man to the devil.” Bodily diseases are frequently removed through the aid of physic, yet no one, from this circumstance, ever thought of the following general inference, “ That diseases are subject to man, not man to diseases.” And, it should have been remembered, that, as this writer himself assures us, the ancients did not impute every instance of madness to the operation of spirits. But it would be loss of time to dwell on little circumstances of this kind ; we have more important things in view, concerning which he thus delivers his mind.

§ 7. “ I shall only observe, that in every part of the world that falls under our observation, we see *a fixed order* of causes and effects, such as is not disturbed by any invisible beings ; and the preservation of this order seems essential to the happiness of the creation May we not from hence conclude, that the human system, in particular,  
“ is

“ is governed in the same manner, and sub-  
 “ ject to invariable laws, such as none but God  
 “ can controul ?——Now, if reason shews us,  
 “ that there is and must be a fixed order of  
 “ causes and effects throughout the whole  
 “ system of nature ; and that both the gene-  
 “ ration and cure of the diseases in question  
 “ are the effects of this constitution ; then  
 “ reason doth certainly remonstrate against  
 “ ascribing them to supernatural causes ; which  
 “ is the point we undertook to prove°.”

This is the close of our Author’s reasoning, concerning the true cause of those affecting disorders which are called dæmoniackal. Now let us enquire into the real import of what he hath delivered. “ In every part of  
 “ the world,” says he, “ that falls under our  
 “ observation, we see a fixed order of causes  
 “ and effects, such as is not disturbed by any  
 “ invisible beings.” Then it is plain that this *fixed order* is not at all inconsistent with the most extreme misery, since it is neither interrupted by the treacherous and base practices of wicked men which frequently draw others into ruin, nor with the case of dæmoniacs. And yet as we are told, “ the prefer-  
 “ vation of this order seems essential to the

¶ Farm. on Dem. p. 166—168.

“ happiness

“ happiness of the creation.” We must, therefore, fall into one or other of the following conclusions : either first, that this “ *fixed order* “ of causes and effects ” is really interrupted, since there are such cases of extreme misery, as those of the dæmoniacs ; or else, that the causes of happiness and misery are the same ; or next, that this “ fixed order ” here alluded to, is the source neither of misery nor happiness to mankind ; or lastly, that this “ fixed order of “ causes and effects ” is the source of human happiness, but not of the miseries of men. If it be said, that our Author has not affirmed any thing in this passage with respect to mankind, but only proposed the following inference, “ May we not from hence conclude, that the human system in particular “ is governed in the same manner, and subject to invariable laws, such as none but “ God can controul ? ” This, we answer, alters not the case ; since those “ invariable laws,” by which the world, and the human system as a part of it, “ is governed,” are not at all “ disturbed,” either by maniacal disorders, or other calamities, of consequence they are not inconsistent with the most extreme misery ; and, if they be “ essential ” to the well-being of human nature, we must allow, either that these “ invariable laws ” are a source of human happiness,

happiness, but not the cause of misery to mankind, or else, that happiness and misery arise from the same causes, and that all the calamities and advantages of human nature were immediately determined, and unalterably fixed and established, by Almighty God, in the original constitution of things. Our author, so far from denying any part of this consequence, affirms the whole of it in direct language, “ Now,” says he, “ if reason shews  
 “ us that there is, and must be a fixed order  
 “ of causes and effects throughout the whole  
 “ system of nature; and that both the *gene-*  
 “ *ration* and *cure* of the diseases in question  
 “ are the effects of this constitution; then  
 “ reason doth certainly remonstrate against  
 “ ascribing them to supernatural causes:”—  
 And we must, of consequence, receive these two articles as authentic maxims: That the government of the world is committed to the general laws of matter and motion, without the immediate influence and interposition of God <sup>p</sup>; and, That all the error, delusion, and misery, which attend not only dæmoniacs but the whole human species, are to be attributed solely to “ a fixed order of  
 “ causes and effects,” established “ throughout

<sup>p</sup> The same doctrine in p. 183.

“ the

“ the whole system of nature,” — “ the preservation of which is essential to the happiness of the creation.” Hence it clearly follows, that mankind are left

“ *To stand or walk, to rise or tumble,*

“ *As matter and as motion, jumble.*”

This view of Divine Providence appears to me, not only repugnant to reason, but wholly inconsistent with the principles of religion both natural and revealed. According to the doctrine here advanced, we can neither affirm, that man is a moral agent, nor that any evidence of God’s moral rectitude can be discovered from his government of the world. The various calamities and advantages of the human species are equally ascribed to the original *constitution* of nature ; which, as we have seen, is directly contrary to the account given of this matter in the Holy Scriptures. The true reason now more fully appears, why this gentleman is so very careful never to allow the influence of any superior created beings, within the limits of the human system, and so anxious to prove, that no effects of their agency either are, or ever were, seen on this earthly globe. His scheme, to say the least of it, is uniform, though irreconcilable with the doctrines

doctrines of revelation ; for he cannot, without gross absurdities, allow any influence from the devil in the cause of human miseries ; since, on the principles here laid down, it was God alone who introduced sin into this world, and who, in the original constitution of things, as much determined and fixed every instance of delusion, wickedness, and distress, as he did the motions of the heavenly bodies, and the stated productions of the earth. This doctrine, in its consequences, doth undoubtedly put an end to morality, and extinguish our ideas of difference between virtue and vice.

§ 8. These principles, as might be easily shewn, did it belong to our present undertaking, are the ground of our author's *Dissertation on Miracles*, as well as the foundation of his *Essay on Demoniacs*. The following passage will serve as an example of what is taught in that treatise, concerning this part of our subject, “ The laws of nature were at first ordained, and are continually preserved by God ; they are the rules by which he exercises his dominion over the world. His wisdom did not, and indeed could not, see fit to leave the world without laws ; or (which would have been  
 6 “ much

“ much the same thing) leave those laws to  
 “ be controuled at the will of his creatures,  
 “ to the strict and constant observance of  
 “ which, we owe the regularity and uniformity  
 “ of the natural world; the settled order of  
 “ causes and effects in the moral; and the  
 “ continued harmony of the universe, all the  
 “ parts of which are related to each other,  
 “ and conspire together to carry on one com-  
 “ mon design, and thus demonstrate that all  
 “ things are under the steady and constant  
 “ direction of *one* ruling counsel<sup>9</sup>.” All dif-  
 ference is entirely taken away, by our Divine,  
 between physical and moral causes, and the  
 actions of mankind, whether good or evil, are  
 ascribed to the same causality with the pro-  
 ductions of nature. According to this plan,  
 there can be no such thing as moral agency,  
 since our voluntary actions are subjected to the  
 same *kind* of necessity with the operations of  
 matter; for “ the *settled order* of causes and ef-  
 “ fects, in the moral world,” are directly attri-  
 buted to the very same laws, with “ the regu-  
 “ larity and *uniformity* of the natural world.”  
 Thus, not only the interposition and ministry  
 of superior created beings, but the imme-  
 diate and constant agency of God himself,

<sup>9</sup> On Mir. p. 90.



are excluded from the affairs of mankind, on those old Epicurean principles which equally put an end to all superstition, morality, and religion.

§ 9. Far be it from us, to impute any evil design to this writer; we doubt not, he really meant to serve the cause of virtue, which he thought could not be more effectually done, than by removing every thing which appeared to him in the light of superstition. But we have a right to affirm, that in supporting his hypothesis concerning dæmoniacks, and in pointing out what he apprehends to be the true source of human calamities, he urges those very arguments that have been so often alledged both against the *truth* and *necessity* of a Revelation. Indeed, it appears to us, that either his scheme or the Gospel of Christ must fall to the ground; there seems no alternative. He denies the power of all superior beings, God excepted, to do either good or evil to mankind, and on this principle rejects the influence of evil spirits from every cause of human misery. But the Holy Scriptures constantly affirm, that the devil beguiled man from his allegiance to God, and seduced him into sin; they represent this

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prince

prince of wicked spirits as the immediate author of all mischief, and therefore call him “an homicide from the beginning.” Mr. Farmer considers all the calamities and advantages of human nature as immediately determined and fixed in the original constitution of things, and hence maintains, that the human system is governed by the very same invariable laws with the natural world. But the Holy Scriptures assure us, that the present state of human nature is not that in which it was originally created: they attribute all the evils of mankind to sin: they will neither allow, that God is the author of death, nor that human miseries arise from the original constitution of things: but they attribute every blessing to the immediate and constant agency of the divine being and his unmerited goodness. This is the grand hinge on which, not only the whole controversy between Christians and the opposers of a divine Revelation, but the very being of religion and virtue turns. If the present state of human nature arose from the original constitution of things, and man be just such as he came at first from the hands of his maker, we must conclude, with Lord Bolingbroke, that neither the goodness nor justice of God ever required, that we  
 should

should be better or happier than we are, at least in the present world; and, that no sufficient reason can be assigned for an extraordinary Revelation. If the settled order of causes and effects in the moral world, together with the regularity and uniformity of the natural world, are all to be ascribed to the operation of the very same laws, we can by no means avoid that conclusion which Mr. Hume seems to have intended in his “Essay on Liberty and Necessity,” That it is impossible for reason to shew how human actions can have any moral turpitude at all, without involving our Creator in the same guilt. We have never yet seen any objections raised against those principles on which the Gospel is rested, which do not strike as much at the ground of natural religion as at the foundation of the Christian scheme. The present interest of society in general, as well as the future happiness of mankind, is inseparably connected with the truth and reality of those doctrines which are delivered in the Scriptures, concerning the ruin of human nature by the malice and wickedness of the devil, and its recovery from sin and wretchedness by the Son of God. The principles of the Christian religion can never be overthrown without the loss of morality; and, while a real difference

is maintained in the world between virtue and vice, and man is considered as a moral agent, it seems clear to us, Mr. Farmer's account of the origin of human calamities *must be rejected.*

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## C H A P. IX.

*The Scripture Doctrine concerning Dæmoni-  
cal Possessions, shewn to be consistent with many  
Appearances, both in the natural and moral  
World.*

**I**F any thing of real moment can be alledged against the received doctrine concerning dæmoniacs, it must be on one or other of the following principles: either, first, That the influence of evil spirits, in this matter, is contrary to all appearances both in the natural and moral world, and that there is nothing discoverable in human nature, which hath not already been sufficiently and certainly accounted for, without the agency of invisible beings; or else, That possessions by evil spirits, is a doctrine contrary both to the principles and design of Revelation. Now,

we apprehend that neither of these articles can be easily supported.

§ 1. It doth not appear, that the influence of evil spirits, as alledged in the case of dæmoniacks, is at all inconsistent with what is frequently observed, both in the natural and moral world. Much indeed hath been written of late, to shew, “ that the same arguments which prove the existence of superior created spirits, do still more strongly conclude against their acting out of their proper sphere; and that, though the inhabitants of other systems may have larger capacities than mankind, yet they have no more power over us, than we have over them, nor any influence beyond the limits of their own globe.” This, as hath been shewn\*, if it means any thing, is a piece of mere artifice, contrived to avoid a direct denial of the existence and agency of intelligent beings superior to men, within the limits of the human system. The question is not, Whether the inhabitants of other globes have any influence over the inhabitants of the earth? (We do not know, that any one ever thought of such an absurdity); but, Whether

\* Chap. vi. particularly § 5.

it is not possible, according to the doctrines of Revelation, for certain powerful spirits, styled the ministers of God's providence, to be employed in things which relate to mankind; and, Whether "the angels, who kept not their first estate," may not be capable of doing much injury to human nature? We cannot reason on this subject, with the least degree of propriety, from a scale of beings limited to our own planet, to the like gradation in remote systems; because our business is solely with a doctrine of divine Revelation, respecting a certain order of beings, never once considered by the sacred penmen as limited to any particular globe. And what is there, in this idea, inconsistent, either with reason, or the analogy of nature? The inhabitants of our own globe depend so much on the justly-tempered motions of certain particles which come from the sun, that most of them would soon perish, were they removed to a greater or less distance from that fountain of light and heat. Many of the different parts of nature owe both their excellencies and defects to the influence of remote bodies. Now, is it absolutely necessary for us, as rational creatures, to assert, that there is no *created* influence which extends from one system of intelligent beings to another, except that of matter? If

we

we allow a mutual operation from different globes, on one another, as well as a reciprocal influence between different bodies, on the same globe; where is the absurdity, in supposing a number of superior created intelligences, whose agency reacheth, and whose proper sphere of action extendeth, to the intelligent beings of different systems; and who, under the direction of God, are ministers of his providence to the inhabitants of different globes, as well as men on this earth, are, or the inhabitants of any of the planets may be, to one another? If the elements around our own globe are often attended with secret and various influences on the human species, as well as on other animals, in subserviency to the providence of God; why may there not be intelligent agents, superior to men, whose stated influence is within the limits of the human system, and who may frequently act, in an unseen manner, as ministers of the divine will? What is there contrary to reason in supposing, that many of these superior beings might deviate into sin and rebellion against God, and thus become the wicked instruments of delusion and distress to others<sup>b</sup>? Do any of these ideas derogate more from the wisdom

<sup>b</sup> See, on this subject, Dr. Price on Provid. Sect. iv. p. 129—132.

and majesty of the divine government, than an acknowledgement, that God useth men and inferior animals, as instruments of his providence, in various respects, towards one another? We speak of these things, neither as mere suppositions, nor as the result of any philosophical investigation and experiment, but only as the dictates of Revelation. The holy angels are never spoken of, in the word of God, as the inhabitants of any particular globe; and those “who kept not their first estate,” as we are assured, “left their proper habitation.” The agency of both these kinds of spirits, on earth, is often affirmed by the Scriptures in the most express language; this is enough for our purpose. The influence of such beings, within the limits of the human system, implieth no contradiction.

§ 2. We see many things effected, even in the natural world, by the interposition of men, which never would have been produced by the mere operation of the laws of nature, and yet they are so far from being contrary to the laws of matter and motion, that they are brought to pass by the instrumentality of those very laws; though such effects would never have appeared, without the immediate agency of intelligent beings. What surprising appearances



appearances of different fruits are often produced by the art of grafting; peaches, apricots, and plumbs, are all seen blended together in their growth upon an almond tree; the plane-tree laden with apples, and the wild ash with pears. The rough nature of the wildest plants is frequently softened, and forced to lay aside its offensive qualities; which is thus well expressed by the poet :

*Yet these, receiving grafts of other kind,  
Or thence transplanted, change their savage mind;  
Their wildness lose, and, quitting nature's part,  
Obey the rules and discipline of art.*

The appearance of things is here very much altered from what it would have been, if left to the common operations of the laws of matter; yet no one looks upon such productions as an alteration of those laws themselves, nor considers them as miraculous. The usual course of nature is as much varied, when an ash is laden with pears, or an almond-tree with plumbs, as when delusive perceptions are raised in the human species. But how does it appear, that the immediate agency of intelligent beings is more necessary in producing the former, than in effecting the latter?

Not

Not only in plants, but also in animals, the species may be varied, and such alterations made even in their inclination and qualities, as never would have happened without the voluntary and deliberate interposition of men. Since, then, it is in the power of mankind to alter the course of things with respect to certain beings below themselves, why may not those superior beings, whose existence and agency within the limits of the human system are so often asserted in the Holy Scriptures, be capable of producing the like effects ; though as much superior indeed to any thing that we can do, as their abilities are larger and more extensive than ours?

§ 3. The welfare and safety of individuals depends in a great measure upon their situation among the rest of mankind, and upon the voluntary actions of other rational agents with whom they have to do<sup>c</sup>. How often do wicked men, by various means, lead worthy persons into thoughts and reasonings, equally painful, delusive, and ruinous ! The mind is frequently deceived, by an ambiguous word, a look, or a nod, from those around

<sup>c</sup> See Dr. Price on Provid. p. 124.

us, or by other devices suited to the purpose. Opinions are unjustly altered, the passions cruelly raised, the heart wickedly pierced with the bitterest grief, from the contrivances and actions of others, it may be, in a remote country ; so that lifeless bodies, striking against one another, in rapid motion, are not affected with greater force and violence, than men are by the reasoning and actions of one another, even at a distance. The peace and quiet of whole nations may depend, perhaps at this instant, on the capricious resolutions of a few worthless persons. Who can tell what dreadful consequences may arise to thousands, from a thought starting suddenly into the mind of a tyrant, or his prime minister ? We cannot but see, with how much ease some persons will lodge the most delusive and affecting ideas in the imagination of others, and delight themselves, too, in the exercise of such ungodly skill. Why, then, may not wicked and superior spirits be still more capable of abusing the organs of perception and fancy, and of terrifying the soul with false ideas and hideous appearances ? There are many unhappy persons, to whose minds dreadful images and thoughts are conveyed, without the help of words, and scenes made to arise, as it were, full in their view, without the aid of external objects,

*Like*

*Like Pentheus, when, distracted with his fear,  
He saw two suns, and double Thebes appear.*

The innumerable facts of this kind, which occur in all ages, never can be denied. Now, have such things been as yet sufficiently and certainly accounted for? We are, indeed, often told, with some degree of confidence, that the doctrine of possessions is *absurd*, and altogether *impossible*; and that those cases, which in the Gospel are ascribed to the influence of evil spirits, were nothing more than common instances of madness, epilepsy, and other disorders frequent in the human body. This is a very concise method of refuting vulgar errors. What we consider as a difficulty is to be denied in the strongest language, and something else is to be asserted in its room, perhaps equally difficult to be accounted for, but this circumstance not being observed by people in general, it may pass very well for an easy solution of the matter. However, most of the cases mentioned by the sacred writers, under the idea of dæmoniacal possessions, are at least acknowledged to be instances of madness; now, what is implied under the term *madness*? And what is the immediate cause of those singular effects attending this unhappy state; or, in  
other

other words, whence arise those delusive and agonizing perceptions which have no connection at all with external objects? Unless these things be accurately explained, and fully accounted for, without the immediate agency of any intelligent being whatever, all that hath yet been said, against the vulgar notion of possessing dæmons, must be considered as mere declamation and empty sound.

§ 4. *Madness* implies either a preternatural state, or disorder, of sensation ; and they are properly *mad*, who are unalterably persuaded of the existence of certain things, or of the appearance and actions of certain beings, that either do not exist at all, or that do not actually appear to them, and, who also behave according to such erroneous persuasion<sup>d</sup>. The idea of madness properly belongs to those delusive perceptions which are raised in the mind, by means of some internal defect, or influence. In the most unhappy circumstances of this kind, we generally observe, that the faculties of the soul are in their full and perfect exercise. For, supposing the perceptions themselves to be supported by real and visible ob-

<sup>d</sup> See Dr. Battie on Madness.

jects, the reasoning of the person in such cases would appear to be natural and just. But the perceptions of a madman do not arise from external objects, his dread, therefore, and reasoning from them, will appear to us to be groundless and absurd; but the perceptions themselves really exist in his mind, and his deductions from them are, for the most part, as rational as those which sober men usually make from what they really hear and see. Madmen are as much passive in delusive perceptions as we are in those that are true, when we see different persons employed in various forms, hear them speak what is pleasing, or threatening; and are alarmed by shrieks, lamentations and groans; all which sensations are as frequent in madness as in common and real life. It is no more in the power of madmen to avoid such perceptions, although there are no correspondent objects from without, than it is in the power of sober men to avoid such sensations, while they actually look upon persons speaking, and hear sounds of that kind. Madmen, likewise, as ardently wish to be delivered from those distressing perceptions which we justly call delusive, as the most calm and rational can do to be exempted from the various calamities of human nature.

Hence,

Hence, also, it is evident, that those delusive perceptions are by no means the extravagant work of fancy; for to assert this would be the same thing as to deny, that there are any delusive perceptions, or any madness at all; that is, it would be a contradiction: because, in the inventions of fancy, the mind is active, but, in the perception of objects and sounds, it is passive. The mind cannot make things appear as it pleaseth, but must receive them as they appear. We, indeed, may sometimes avoid distressing perceptions, by turning away from those objects which occasion them, but this is not in the power of a madman; for let him go where he will, his delusive perceptions accompany him, not having any correspondent objects from without: he hears distinct sounds, where there is a profound silence to other men, and perceives objects, where we could have no such perceptions: yet the soul of a madman is as conscious, that what it perceives is not its own invention, as we can be in any case, that what we see or hear is not our own work and contrivance. Now, to deny this, would be to deny, that those perceptions are *delusive*; which, in effect, would be a denial, that there are any such persons in being as madmen.

§ 5. “Madness,” (says a late eminent physician, who was much conversant with all its various appearances) “with respect to its cause, “is distinguishable into two species. The “first is solely owing to an internal disorder “of the nervous substance: the second is “likewise owing to the same nervous substance being indeed in like manner disordered, but disordered *ab extra*; and “therefore chiefly to be attributed to some “remote and accidental cause: The first “species, until a better name can be found, “may be called *original*, the second may “be called *consequential* madness. We may “with the greatest degree of probability “affirm, that madness is *original*, when it “both ceases and appears afresh, without “any assignable cause.—Original madness, “whether it be hereditary or intermitting, is “not removeable by any method which the “science of physic, in its present imperfect “state, is able to suggest.—But although “original madness is never radically cured “by human art, its ill-conditioned fate is, “however, a little recompensed sometimes “by a perfect recovery, sometimes by long “intervals of sanity, without our assistance, “and beyond expectation. Besides, original “madness is in itself very little prejudicial  
“ to



“ to animal life ; for it is notorious that men  
 “ really mad live as long as those who are  
 “ perfectly in their senses, and whenever they  
 “ sicken or die, they, like other mortals,  
 “ are most frequently attacked by illnesses,  
 “ which have no necessary connection with,  
 “ or dependence upon, their old complaint  
 “ of false perception.” Here, then, it  
 seems, that all madness is occasioned by some  
 disorder or irregularity in the nervous sub-  
 stance ; that there are instances in which no  
 physical cause can be assigned for that disorder ;  
 that madness of this kind is not re-  
 moveable by the science of physic ; that mad-  
 ness sometimes ariseth from causes very little  
 prejudicial to animal life ; that such instances  
 are often attended with intervals of sanity,  
 and, in some cases, with a perfect recovery,  
 without human assistance ; and that, what-  
 ever be the cause of such delusive percep-  
 tions, it operates in connection with the ner-  
 vous substance, without any real injury to  
 the health of the body.

§ 6. The accidental and remote causes of  
 natural sensation are readily understood ; they  
 are bodies that lie within the compass of our  
 own observation ; the particles emitted from  
 them, together with their motion and impulse

\* Battie on Madness, sect. 9.

upon the organs of sense, have been frequently and well defined. It seems, likewise, to be a point now almost universally acknowledged, that the medullary or nervous substance communicating with the brain is the seat or instrument of sensation, and that pressure upon this substance is the last of those causes of sensation which come within the reach of our knowledge. Thus the forementioned skilful author, whose words we prefer to any other on this part of our subject, because it is within the line of his own profession. “ Pressure, of the medullary substance contained in the nervous  
 “ filaments cannot indeed be imagined,  
 “ without some alteration in the former  
 “ arrangement of those material particles  
 “ which constitute that substance. But we  
 “ have no idea whatever, either intellectual  
 “ or visible, how, and in what manner, those  
 “ particles are, by such pressure, *juxta positæ*,  
 “ previously to sensation thereby excited :  
 “ Whence it undoubtedly follows, that, pressure upon the medullary substance contained in the nervous filaments, is the last  
 “ in order of all those causes of sensation  
 “ which we have any idea of. Thus far,  
 “ and no further, our knowledge in these  
 “ matters reaches, limited by the outside of  
 “ the seat of sensation ; what passes within  
 “ being

“ being mere conjecture.” Again, says he,  
 “ A very little reflection would convince us,  
 “ that, the remote and accidental causes of  
 “ any effect may be many, but the sufficient  
 “ and necessary, as well as the immediate,  
 “ cause, can be but one ; since either of two  
 “ causes supposed sufficient will render the  
 “ other unnecessary, and either cause sup-  
 “ posed necessary, will render the other in-  
 “ sufficient <sup>f</sup>.” Hence, then, we may ob-  
 serve, that the last of those remote and acci-  
 dental causes of sensation which come within  
 the reach of our knowledge is, pressure upon  
 the medullary substance, occasioned by the  
 influence of external bodies ; that, this is yet  
 neither the sufficient nor the immediate cause  
 of all sensation, since the very same per-  
 ceptions which usually accompany the mo-  
 tion and impulse of external bodies do con-  
 stantly arise in the minds of madmen, without  
 any influence from external objects, and there-  
 fore, without any external cause at all ; that,  
 the sufficient and immediate cause of delusive  
 perceptions is internal in its operation, and  
 wholly independent of all external objects ;  
 that it is capable, by some means or other,  
 of effecting new arrangements in those ma-

<sup>f</sup> Battie on Madness, sect. 4.

terial particles which constitute the medullary substance, or the sensory, otherwise there could be no delusive perceptions, and of consequence no madness; that this internal cause brings on the same kind of alterations and new arrangements, in the matter of the sensory, which accompany the appearance of external objects, living agents, or significant action, and which immediately follow articulate sounds or words in all languages; and therefore, lastly, that this internal and immediate cause of delusive perceptions, which thus acts on the sensory, hath all the powers and qualities of an intelligent and designing agent, for, if many of those effects which are produced in madness be not proper and peculiar to such agents, it will be hard to point out any thing peculiar to an intelligent being.

§ 7. Now, what can we assign, as the sufficient and immediate cause of such delusive perceptions as are an exact copy of those genuine ones which attend the real presence and language of known intelligent beings, and with the same variety too, as in the occurrences of life? Must we ascribe them to the casual impulse of material particles upon one another; or can the disordered matter in the human frame not only surpass the operations  
of

of the body in a better state, but even produce those effects by which intelligent and designing agents are distinguished? We can no more understand, how any fortuitous and irregular motion of the parts, within the body, should be able to affect the sensory, in such a manner as is requisite to excite those delusive perceptions which constitute madness, than we can conceive, how it is possible for the tide to throw the sand on the sea shore, every day, into such forms as will present the spectator, with poems or dissertations, without the interposition of any intelligent being. Our present enquiry is, not whether the soul is a material or an immaterial substance, or any substance, but whether those delusive perceptions of articulate sounds discourses and even writing in various forms, are to be attributed merely to casual operations of matter, or to the influence of some intelligent cause? In this question all are interested, whatever be their particular notions concerning the human soul, or their opinions with respect to the nature or reality of matter. Dean Berkeley maintains, that, we might be affected with all the ideas which we now have, even though there were no bodies existing without, because the very same ideas which are occasioned by the intervention

of supposed real bodies are perceived in maniacal cases, without the presence or operation of such bodies. What then excites those ideas? Who, in those instances, robs the soul of its peace and happiness; what being or beings thus torment it with false and horrid representations? On the other hand, can the matter of the body speak threatening words to its own soul, and perform certain spontaneous gestures corresponding to the language perceived? Must we suppose, that, the sensory, by making impressions on itself, or by receiving the casual impulse of other material particles, can imitate life, speech, and reasoning; or, are we to believe, that, the sensory itself is an active rational thing, independent of that consciousness which constitutes the person? It will be no easy task for any one to avoid the absurdities here intimated, who shall impute the delusive perceptions of madmen to the casual impulse of material particles in a disordered body, as their sufficient and immediate cause.

§ 8. Mr. Farmer assures us, that “ Those  
 “ who first invented this doctrine” [of dæmoni-  
 acal possessions] “ were men unacquainted  
 “ with nature, and yet ambitious of account-  
 “ ing for its most mysterious phænomena;”  
 that

that the things which they advanced “serve  
 “only to shew their ignorance, their pre-  
 “sumption, and their superstition;” and  
 then he agrees with Lucian, that, the most  
 renowned of those philosophers who embraced  
 this opinion, “*differed from children only*  
 “*in their grey hairs and long beards, and*  
 “*were even more easy to be deceived than*  
 “*they;*” but that, “on the other hand, those  
 “persons whose minds were not disturbed  
 “by superstitious terrors, and who gained an  
 “insight into nature, which was the case with  
 “the Sadducees and Epicureans, pronounced  
 “what commonly passed for demoniacal posses-  
 “sions, to be mere natural disorders<sup>6</sup>.” We  
 cannot tell whence he derived his intimate  
 knowledge of “those” persons, “who *first*  
 “*invented* this doctrine;” however, supposing  
 all that is here said to be true, it would not  
 follow, that, the notion of dæmoniacal posses-  
 sions is groundless and absurd, because it is not  
*impossible* for men as wise as even “the Saddu-  
 “cees and Epicureans” to be mistaken, nor  
 for persons as ignorant as those who are here  
 treated with so much contempt to believe  
 things that are true. But, if more solid argu-  
 ments had been at hand, it is not probable,

<sup>6</sup> Essay on Dem. p. 153—155.

that, such unbecoming language as this would have been used. We confess ourselves to be unacquainted with nature, and therefore advance no hypothesis: we candidly enquire, whether the sufficient and immediate cause of those effects which constitute madness hath as yet been, in all cases, fully ascertained, without supposing the agency of any invisible beings whatever? The doctrine in dispute we received, on the sole authority of the Holy Scriptures, and were satisfied with the account which they have given. But, this gentleman insists upon it, that, the facts were not as represented by the sacred penmen, and is *really ambitious* of accounting for the most *mysterious phenomena* that attended them, on other principles than those mentioned by the apostles. We hope, therefore, that, he will not be found more forward to ridicule those unhappy persons whose misfortune it was to be ignorant and deceived, than he is to shew the world the sufficient and immediate cause of those delusive perceptions, which himself acknowledgeth to have attended what are called dæmoniacal cases, and which are the uncontested effects of madness. We expected something more on this subject than an equivocal and evasive representation of facts, supported with two or three bold assertions ;



assertions; which is all that he hath, as yet, thought fit to offer. “ I now add,” says he, “ that reason remonstrates against the doctrine “ of possessions, and clearly shews us, that “ the disorders imputed to them *actually do* “ *proceed* from natural causes. The temper- “ rament of the body, the texture of the “ brain, the motion of the blood, the excess “ or defect of the animal spirits, the influence “ of air and diet, intenseness of thought, “ violent passions, and sudden frights, will “ disturb or destroy the regular exercise of the “ understanding <sup>b</sup>.” To this very nervous remonstrance we return the following short answer; that “ the *regular exercise* of the under- “ standing” is “ disturbed or destroyed” every day, in persons who yet have the *proper use of their senses*, by many other things as well as those here mentioned, such as the stone, the gout, or even the tooth-ach, but that, our author’s business was, to have shewn the *sufficient and immediate cause of those delusive perceptions* of spontaneous beings, long discourses, and clear reasoning, which excite the passions of dread and horror in the souls of mad men, even while there are no sounds, nor discourse, nor objects from without, to affect the sense of

<sup>b</sup> On Dem. p. 160.

hearing,

hearing, or the organs of sight. It will never satisfy an enquiring mind to be told, that, such effects *may* arise, or that, they *actually do arise*, from the internal structure, or disorder of the body; this is the very thing to be proved, consistently with the nature of matter, the laws of motion, and the distinct personality of individuals. Will this gentleman alter his opinion concerning any one point, because he is peremptorily told, that, the contrary *may* be true, or that, it *actually is true*? Nay, he doth not look upon himself as obliged to believe, that, it is possible for any superior created spirits to affect the human system, even though, not only very learned men have alledged strong reasons in support of such a notion, but though the apostles themselves have asserted the fact. Why then should it be thought necessary for us to give up our faith in the language of Scripture concerning this subject, merely because, we are positively assured that those delusive perceptions which attend madness *actually do arise* from bodily disorders alone, without one argument offered in support of the assertion?

§ 9. It hath been already shewn, that, the internal and immediate cause of delusive perceptions, whatever it be, is capable of producing

ducing the very same kind of new arrangements in the medullary substance, or impressions on the sensory, which attend the appearance of external objects and spontaneous beings, and which follow those articulate sounds that convey distinct thoughts and determinate ideas. Now, if bodily distempers are to be considered as the sufficient and immediate cause of such perceptions, let it be shewn, how the casual alteration or mere disarrangement of material particles may obtrude scenes of vision, and excite very distinct perceptions of activity and language, conveying thoughts in a regular connection, without the aid of any intelligent being. Did madness imply nothing more than either an erroneous perception of external objects and sounds, or a kind of insensibility and stupor, then indeed we might account for it from the disordered state of the bodily organs, but, we have too many affecting proofs, that, it is not only connected with the perception of objects which have no existence from without, but also of thought and arguments, not the patient's own, and which were never communicated by any one of mankind. Let any pressure of the medullary substance be supposed, can this accidental alteration in the *juxta position* of particles of matter alone

produce clear perceptions of articulate sounds which fill the soul with pleasure or dread, while, at the same time, the mind itself is conscious that it no more invented these things than it did the aphorisms of Hippocrates? Suppose any obstruction in the *meatus auditorius*, and in consequence of this, what accidental and unusual impressions on the auditory nerve you please, yet, how should these alone give clear perceptions of a long discourse in which are contained a variety of striking thoughts and reflections, nay, perhaps, a distinct perception of words coming from different persons? If diseases, or the fortuitous impulse of material particles within the body, be seriously considered as the sufficient and immediate cause of such perceptions, let it be likewise shewn, on this hypothesis, how a sober man, in the proper exercise of his senses, may prove, that, there are other spontaneous and intelligent beings in the world besides himself, or, that it is impossible for more distinct principles of thought and reasoning than one, to be united with the human body.

§ 10. If it be said, that genuine perception itself, as well as those other powers which are termed mental, is only the result of the  
organical

organical structure of the brain, and that delusive perceptions are the natural consequence of irregular impressions on the brain, or of unusual alterations in the arrangement of those particles which constitute that substance: let it be said, what is the immediate cause of those extraordinary impressions on the brain which excite lively perceptions of active beings and articulate sounds, while there are no correspondent objects or sounds from without; and let it be also shewn, how the same organical structure may both produce a continued consciousness of the power of perception and thought, and also excite, as it were over and above, clear perceptions of other intelligent beings communicating thoughts and determinate resolutions, without the aid of any external object. We do not ask, whether it can be proved, on this hypothesis concerning delusive perceptions, that, one organized system of matter can only constitute *one* conscious thinking self; but whether it is possible to shew, *how many* different thinking selves may all be the result of one such organical structure as that of the brain? For madmen are as conscious, that, those words and thoughts which they perceive as coming from different persons are not their own, as any individual sober man  
can

can be, that, he never either said or thought, that, God was nothing but matter under a certain modification. Delusive perceptions are attended with as insuperable difficulties on this hypothesis, as on any other scheme whatever; because it divides the madman into different thinking selves, all which, upon recovering the proper use of his senses, coalesce again into one, which, for any thing we can tell, on this principle, is a self different from all the others concerned in madness, and thus personal identity becomes an incomprehensible thing. Mr. Locke was perplexed whenever he touched upon this point: "How far," says he, "the consciousness of past actions  
 " is annexed to any individual agent, so that  
 " another cannot possibly have it, will be  
 " hard for us to determine, till we know  
 " what kind of action it is, that cannot be  
 " done, without a reflex act of perception accompanying it, and how performed by  
 " thinking substances, who cannot think  
 " without being conscious of it. But that  
 " which we call the *same consciousness*, not  
 " being the same individual act, why one  
 " intellectual substance may not have represented to it, as done by itself, what it  
 " never did, and was, perhaps, done by  
 " some other agent; why, I say, such a re-  
 " presentation

“ presentation may not possibly be without  
 “ reality of matter of fact, as well as several  
 “ representations in dreams are, which yet,  
 “ whilst dreaming, we take for true, will be  
 “ difficult to conclude from the nature of  
 “ things.” This article he resolves into the  
 goodness of God ; “ who,” says he, “ as far  
 “ as the happiness or misery of any of his  
 “ sensible creatures is concerned in it, will  
 “ not by a fatal error of theirs, transfer  
 “ from one to another that consciousness  
 “ which draws reward or punishment with  
 “ it.” Thus, supposing such a transfer to be  
 possible, he leaves the matter, with one single  
 remark : “ How far this may be an argu-  
 “ ment against those who would place think-  
 “ ing in a system of fleeting animal spirits, I  
 “ leave to be considered<sup>1</sup>.” And afterwards,  
 in considering the object of rewards and pu-  
 nishments, he thus expresseth himself, “ But  
 “ if it be possible for the same man to have  
 “ distinct incommunicable consciousness at  
 “ different times, it is past doubt the same  
 “ man would at different times make diffe-  
 “ rent persons ; which, we see, is the sense  
 “ of mankind in the solemnest declaration of  
 “ their opinions ; human laws not punishing

<sup>1</sup> Essay, &c. B. II. chap. xxvii. § 13.

“ the

“ the *mad man* for the *sober man*’s actions, nor  
 “ the *sober man* for what the *mad man* did,  
 “ thereby making them two persons ; which  
 “ is somewhat explained by our way of speak-  
 “ ing in *English*, when we say, such an one  
 “ *is not himself*, or *is besides himself*; in which  
 “ phrases it is insinuated, as if those who  
 “ now, or at least, first used them, thought  
 “ that *self* was changed, the *self* same per-  
 “ son was no longer in that man <sup>k</sup>.”

/ That Mr. Locke himself suspected it to be really thus, is more than probable ; but that, those who first used such phrases had very different ideas of the matter, is evident, both from the conduct of legislators and the common language of mankind. Human laws neither punish the sober man for the actions of the mad man, nor yet the *mad man himself* for the mischief which may be done by him ; thereby intimating, that the source of the mad man’s conduct is very different from that of the sober man’s, and that the actions of the former are more properly attributed to something which *is not himself* than those of the latter ; for if this were not the case, they ought to be equally punished. This, as we apprehend, was the real judgment of those

<sup>k</sup> Ibid. B. II. chap. xxvii. § 20.



who first instituted such laws, and introduced such terms, and not that they considered the same man to be different persons at different times; which would have been an idea truly absurd. The very phrases also here alledged evidently imply, that some thing is concerned in the actions of the mad man *besides himself*, or, *which is not himself*; for the terms do not intimate, that he is become *another self*, nor that the former person is no longer in that man. The same idea is likewise contained in the common expressions of other languages concerning madness, such as *non compos mentis*, to denote one that is not in his own power, or not under his own direction, but never to signify one who is become a different self from what he was before; also the ancient Greek term, *δαίμωνιόν*, to be mad, signifies one that is under the power of a *dæmon*, or superior being. These expressions serve to shew what hath always been the general sense of mankind; and that this opinion is an erroneous one, or that such phrases have no foundation in nature, will, perhaps, be no easy task to prove.

§ 11. If it be supposed, that those delusive perceptions of intelligent beings, and articu-

B b

late

late sounds importing connected thoughts, may arise from the soul's own activity, let it be shewn on this hypothesis, either how the soul may be unconscious of its own operations at the very time in which it operates, or, how it is possible, that the soul should be conscious of some of its operations and unconscious of others which happen, as it were, in the same instant; and let this be done also without destroying that most important of all evidences which ariseth from self-consciousness. Mad men, when alone, frequently return answers to a variety of questions of which they have the clearest perceptions, as if different persons were talking with them, while, at the same time, they are as conscious that not one thought in those questions was theirs as they are that every thought in their answers was their own. Mr. Locke says, "that they make the soul and the  
 " man two persons who make the soul think  
 " apart what the man is not conscious of——  
 " and that it is as intelligible to say, that a  
 " body is extended without parts as that any  
 " thing thinks without being conscious of it." Thus far we are of the same opinion; they must have a penetrating eye who can discover thoughts arising in the soul of another person,

person, and know them to be his own too, while himself is as conscious as of his own existence that they were never there till invented and conveyed to his mind by something *not himself*. On this principle, we could never know, that our present thoughts and actions are our own, nor that what we perceive to be the present thoughts and actions of other persons are not really ours. This would put an end to self-consciousness, and destroy our inward sense of right and wrong, concerning many of our moral actions.

§ 12. We can scarcely imagine any one can alledge, that the immediate cause both of delusive and true perceptions is the same, because such an idea involves so many direct and obvious contradictions. However, if this opinion should be asserted either as probable or possible, let it be shewn, in plain terms, what that is which may be the immediate cause both of delusive and true perceptions, and let it be said, whether it is considered as a designing, or as an undesigning cause; if the former, whether it is morally good or evil, if the latter, how that which is destitute of thought and reason may yet be in any individual person the sufficient

and immediate cause of clear perceptions both of thoughts and reasonings which he knows not to be his own, with all the certainty that consciousness can give, and it is not possible that any greater should be given.

§. 13. We do not mean, by any thing here advanced, even to suggest, that any person living can determine what particular instances of madness are to be considered as possessions by evil spirits; because we are fully persuaded, that such a determination belongeth only to him who hath power to cast out dæmons, and that any decision of this kind, in our days, would be highly presumptuous, and worthy of severe censure; of consequence, none of our arguments rest on particular cases which happened either two or fifteen centuries ago; nor are we answerable for imprudent appeals to injudicious and rash narrations. Our business is only with those facts which are recorded by the apostles, who were competent judges of what they relate, being themselves enabled to cast out evil spirits, and also while they wrote under the direction of Almighty God. The immediate design of what hath now been offered is only to shew, that there are some very strong reasons for considering

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many

many of the uncontested effects of madness as coinciding with the Scripture doctrine concerning dæmoniacal possessions ; that the facts of this kind mentioned by the sacred penmen are in themselves not impossible, nor perhaps improbable ; and that the plain narrations of the apostles concerning this matter are not to be hastily rejected. Mr. Locke<sup>1</sup> says, “ That  
 “ there are minds and thinking beings in  
 “ other men as well as in himself, every man  
 “ has a reason from their words and actions to  
 “ be satisfied.” How far the constant perceptions of words and rational actions in maniacal cases, not the patient’s own, may be considered as an evidence equally strong, that there are between us and the great God intelligent beings who operate within the limits of the human system, is left for others to determine. There must be more solid arguments than contemptuous ridicule and bold assertions, before sober Christians will be prevailed on to give up the language of the Gospel concerning this subject, as improper and indefensible. It is an easy matter to say a thousand such things as these, “ The doctrine of

<sup>1</sup> Book IV. chap. iii. § 27.

“ possessions by evil spirits is grossly absurd,  
 “ but to ascribe any of the effects of madness  
 “ to such invisible beings is still more ridicu-  
 “ lous, for we do not know, that there are  
 “ any superior spirits capable of affecting the  
 “ human system ; and besides, reason remon-  
 “ strates against such superstitious notions ;  
 “ it is much more natural to account for de-  
 “ lusive perceptions from bodily diseases than  
 “ to have recourse to invisible agents.” To  
 every thing of this kind that may be uttered  
 by any one, the following short answer will be  
 sufficient, “ Nothing can happen without a  
 “ cause ;” the frequent effects that attend mad-  
 ness as much require an adequate cause as the  
 most extraordinary events in ancient times ;  
 many of the appearances in maniacal cases  
 are such as intimate an intelligent cause ; but if  
 this notion be thought so very absurd, let these  
 appearances be fairly accounted for without  
 the immediate agency of any such cause, and let  
 the error of the sacred writers, in attributing  
 so many different events to the influence of su-  
 perior created spirits, be clearly ascertained.  
 Till these things are done, it is neither can-  
 did nor philosophical to reproach others for  
 believing dæmoniacal possessions. The most  
 ignorant may soon contradict and ridicule what  
 the

the wisest know not how to refute. But if our error be so very gross, it will be more easily shewn, and there will be less occasion for misrepresentation and abuse. The doctrine in dispute is connected with some important articles both of natural philosophy and religion, and well deserves a minute enquiry ; it is not to be treated on the same footing with superstitious tales, nor to be decided with bold and unsupported assertions. Mr. Farmer says, “ Reason and experience, our only guides in “ the study of nature, loudly reclaim against “ this doctrine.” Nothing is sooner made than such an assertion ; if he really knows it to be true, we suppose, that he can without much difficulty prove the fact ; this is what we have a right to expect from him who affirmeth such things in opposition to the language of Scripture. In the study of nature, according to some very great authorities, it is our business to reason from phænomena, and deduce causes from their effects, without feigning hypotheses ; and he must be supposed to have acted thus who alledgeth *experience* against the doctrine in question. If therefore our author have decisive experience concerning this matter, it would be very ungenerous in him to withhold it from the world ; if he

have not such experience, it would be uncandid in him to plead any thing of this nature in a dispute of so much importance, nay, we flatter ourselves that he would not. Let an adequate cause then be assigned for those effects which are peculiar to madness, before he condemns the notion of dæmoniacal possessions as so very irrational and absurd ; for we do sincerely wish him to determine in this article, not like those “ grey bearded philosophers ” whom he despiseth, but with solid arguments, and well *authenticated experience*, rather than with that ridiculous vanity for which he hath censured others,



## C H A P. X.

*That the sacred Penmen not only assert but also produce different Facts, in order to prove the Reality of Dæmoniacal Possessions.*

§. 1. **I**T cannot be alledged, that the doctrine of possessions by evil spirits is contrary either to the principles or language of revelation. It hath been already shewn<sup>a</sup>, that according to the Scriptures, sin, misery, and death, were introduced by the chief of the fallen angels, and that “the Son of God” took upon him our nature, for this very reason, that he might “destroy the works of the devil.” Agreeably therefore with these principles, the casting out dæmons is always represented in the New Testament as an indication of Satan’s final overthrow, and as a proof that “the kingdom of God” and Christ “is come unto us<sup>b</sup>.” The expressions of the sacred penmen concerning this article are so very clear and strong that Dr. Lardner freely owns<sup>c</sup>, “That the evangelists themselves be-

<sup>a</sup> See above, chap. vii. § 8.

<sup>b</sup> Above, chap. v. § 22.

<sup>c</sup> On Dem. p. 122.

“ lieved

“ believed the reality of possessions, and thought  
 “ that the persons whose cures they relate  
 “ had evil spirits ;” and this he thinks “ is  
 “ so obvious that it cannot be denied, and  
 “ that it needs not to be contested.” But the  
 Doctor himself was of a contrary opinion, and  
 endeavours to interpret the various cases which  
 are related in the Gospel so as to exclude the  
 agency of evil spirits. We shall here give his  
 solution of the cure of “ the Gadarene dæmo-  
 “ niacs” as a specimen : “ The unhappy case  
 “ before us was a lunacy or distraction.—  
 “ They who suppose, that there was here only  
 “ a distemper, and are unwilling to admit the  
 “ agency of any bad spirits in this case, say,  
 “ these men, or one of them, might, with the  
 “ permission of Jesus, go and drive the swine  
 “ off the precipice into the sea, where they  
 “ were drowned ; or else, our Lord was pleas-  
 “ ed to transfer the lunacy or distraction  
 “ from this man, or these men, to the swine.—  
 “ But I readily own, that I do not approve  
 “ of that solution which supposeth that the  
 “ *lunacy* was transferred from the men to the  
 “ swine. For this implies, that the drowning  
 “ of the swine was owing to our Lord’s agency,  
 “ or interposition, whereas I do not per-  
 “ ceive, that our Lord wrought any miracles  
 “ that were hurtful.—As there is no clear  
 “ evidence

“ evidence of our Lord’s interposing in this  
 “ matter, I presume, it ought not to be ad-  
 “ mitted :——to me it appears most proba-  
 “ ble, that this was done by the man him-  
 “ self, called Legion, either alone, or with  
 “ the joint assistance of the other, his com-  
 “ panion in affliction<sup>d</sup>.” Were it needful to  
 shew the weakness of this interpretation, we  
 might observe, that it supposes “ the swine pe-  
 “ rished before the men were cured,” which  
 is a flat contradiction to the sacred writers,  
 for they expressly say, *And when they were come  
 out, they went into the herd of swine.*——*Then  
 went the devils out of the man, and entered into the  
 swine.* Next, it asserts what none of the evan-  
 gelists have once intimated, nor indeed could  
 intimate, without a gross absurdity, “ that the  
 “ swine were driven into the sea by the mad  
 “ men,” for thus the matter is related,  
*And the unclean spirits went out, and entered into  
 the swine; and behold, the whole herd ran vio-  
 lently down a steep place into the sea, and were  
 choked,* but it is never suggested, that they  
 were driven by any man, far less by the men  
 who had been just that instant restored to  
 their right mind \*. However, we pass by the  
 many objections which might be raised against

<sup>d</sup> On Dem. viii. 17, 18. 101.

\* Matth. viii. 28—end. Luke viii. 26—40.

this explanation of the matter, because it hath been already opposed by the highest authority. And besides, the Doctor freely owns it as what cannot well be disputed, that the evangelists themselves believed the reality of possessions, and he acknowledgeth also the influence of the devil, there was, therefore, the less occasion for *him* to embarrass himself with such unnatural conjectures. A Rousseau would as soon ridicule the Scripture account of the entrance of sin and death, or the devil's putting any thoughts into the heart of Judas Iscariot, as the sacred history of the Gadarene dæmoniacs; and indeed, on whatever principles the two first are either allowed or rejected, the last will follow as possible or impossible. But Mr. Farmer, whose general plan is very different from the Doctor's, after removing this interpretation of his learned friend, introduces his own as more suitable to his purpose, which, for obvious reasons, must be expressed in no other words than those of its author.

§ 2. — “ All that can be inferred from  
 “ their saying that *the demons came out of the*  
 “ *men, and entered the herd of swine*, is, that the  
 “ madness of the former was transferred to  
 “ the latter, in the same sense as *the leprosy of*  
 “ *Naaman*

“ *Naaman was to cleave to Gehazi, and to his*  
 “ *seed for ever.* We allow what a learned  
 “ writer contends for\*, that in the case be-  
 “ fore us, *the power of imagination could have*  
 “ *no place.* It was never said that the swine  
 “ *fancied* themselves possessed; their disorder,  
 “ I admit, was *real*, but not therefore *demo-*  
 “ *niacal.* So great a miracle as that wrought  
 “ upon them, can be ascribed to no other  
 “ agency than that of God. Accordingly,  
 “ we are told, that it was performed at the  
 “ word or command of Christ: *Forthwith*  
 “ *Jesus gave them* (the demons, the reputed  
 “ causes of madness) *leave, and said unto them,*  
 “ *Go<sup>e</sup>.*” The whole of this paragraph is to  
 us incomprehensible, but whether it be the  
 author’s fault, or our own misfortune, we  
 presume not to determine. However, we can-  
 not help asking, What are we to understand by  
 this language, “ that the madness of the two  
 “ men was transferred to the swine, *in the*  
 “ *same sense as the leprosy of Naaman was to*  
 “ *cleave to Gehazi, and to his seed for ever?*”  
 Gehazi acted a treacherous part towards the  
 Syrian, and misrepresented both the prophets  
 character and the blessing of God, for his  
 mercies are never sold, the leprosy of Naa-

\* Warburton.

c On Dem. p. 292—294.

man, therefore, justly rested on Gehazi as a punishment of his crime, but were the swine moral agents ; had they injured the dæmoniacs ; did the madness pass to them as a punishment for their sins ; and why is *the seed* of these animals to be included ? So long as the posterity of Gehazi enjoyed the wealth unlawfully obtained from the Syrian, there was some propriety in a constant memorial of the treachery by which it was acquired, but we can find no reason why *the offspring* of this herd (supposing them to have any) should be seized likewise with madness *for ever* ! If it be said, that no reference was here intended either to the reason or extent of the punishment on Gehazi but only to the reality of the fact, that as the leprosy of Naaman passed to Gehazi so the madness of the men was transferred to the swine, yet still the passage remains unintelligible. The disease of Naaman and that of Gehazi were the same, and the subjects of it equally of the same kind, but we are assured, that the madness of the swine differed very much from the madness of the men, “ since it was never said that the “ swine fancied themselves possessed,” and it is added, “ that *the power of imagination* “ *could have no place* with them ;” if so, how was it possible, that the madness of the

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men,

men, which consisted in delusive perceptions, should be transferred to animals, which, as is confessed, are not capable of such madness? And what then becomes of the reference? If it be alledged, that our author only meant to shew, that the immediate cause of madness in the men operated upon the herd, and produced in the swine the very same effects, as far as they were capable of them, yet still we are surrounded with insuperable difficulties.

It is here said, that the madness of the swine was a miracle; if so, was not that of the men also a miracle? Will this author, against himself, represent the case of dæmoniacks as miraculous, but if it was not, on what principle could that of the swine be miraculous; for we are told, that the madness of the men passed to the swine, and the madness of the swine, which is here affirmed to be the madness of the men, is ascribed to no other agency than that of God? Was God the immediate agent in producing those delusive perceptions with which the unhappy men were afflicted; was God's power here exerted in casting out his own power? If it be said, that the cause, in each case, was not the same, then it is evident, that the madness of the swine and the madness of the men  
could

could not be the same, and the sacred writers must be contradicted, who assign the same cause to each. Indeed, we know not what to make of our author in this unrivalled paragraph. In the beginning of it we are told, that by "*the demons which came out of the men,*" nothing more can be meant than *the madness* which passed from them to the swine, in the close of it we are informed, that the phrenzy of the herd "can be ascribed to no other agency than that of God—and was performed at the command of Christ," who "gave the demons, *the reputed causes* of madness, *leave, and said unto them, Go.*" Here, the phrase *demons* is first put for madness itself, next for the *reputed causes* of madness; and last of all it comes to signify the immediate agency of God himself, to which alone the madness of the herd is to be ascribed.

After all the pains that have been taken, to wrest the Holy Scriptures to the taste of infidels, perhaps, some unbeliever may yet exclaim in the following manner, even upon our author's own amendment of this remarkable instance of sacred history; "the evangelists speak of the operations of Deity under the terms *devils*; The ejection of devils was nothing more than the removal of a divine influence from particular cases; hence the immediate agency of God  
 " passed



“ passed out of the men into the swine, at  
 “ the command of Christ, who forthwith  
 “ gave the agency of his Heavenly Father  
 “ leave, and said unto it, Go ! then it im-  
 “ mediately drove the whole herd into the  
 “ sea ! Thus, the mighty power of God  
 “ was exerted in the destruction of an herd  
 “ of swine, in order to shew, that the un-  
 “ happy men had been driven into madness,  
 “ by his own immediate agency, and not  
 “ that of other beings ! These are the au-  
 “ gust proofs by which the Saviour of man-  
 “ kind is now said to have attested the  
 “ truth of his mission to the world, and shewn  
 “ God to be the sovereign of nature ! All  
 “ which things are to be received without  
 “ the least scruple or doubt upon the pain of  
 “ damnation ! *Juste Dieu ! La tête tourne ; on ne*  
 “ *sait où l’on est* <sup>f</sup>.”

§ 3. The chief point which our author la-  
 bours to establish, throughout the whole of  
 his remarks on these two dæmoniacks, hath in  
 it something shocking as well as absurd,  
 while he speaks with a confidence that cannot  
 but surprise other men. “ Now,” says he,

<sup>f</sup> See Farm. on Dem. p. 4. Note.

“ the history will no more allow you to doubt  
 “ of God’s being the author of the disorder  
 “ of the swine, than of the cure of the dæ-  
 “ moniacs ; for, by the same sovereign word,  
 “ GO, both these miracles were accomplish-  
 “ ed †.” How different was the opinion,  
 and how much more cautious the language,  
 of Dr. Lardner, concerning this matter ! How-  
 ever, after boldly asserting, that, the destruction  
 of the swine was another proof, that “ their  
 “ madness was not owing to a dæmoniacal  
 “ agency,” he makes the following inference,  
 “ Now, since it clearly appears that the madness  
 “ of *the swine* was not owing to the agency of  
 “ demons, is it not a natural inference from  
 “ hence, that the madness of *the demoniacs*  
 “ was not owing to that cause ?”—Which in-  
 ference, if fairly expressed, ought to run  
 thus, “ since the madness of the swine was  
 “ owing to the immediate agency of God,  
 “ that of the demoniacs must be ascribed to  
 “ the same cause”—for this is the very point  
 on which the whole argument turns ; and our  
 author accordingly concludes it with some-  
 what less reserve, “ If the foregoing obser-  
 “ vations are just, the history before us does

† On Dem. p. 300—503.

“ not exhibit a single instance of the power  
 “ and interposition of demons ; though here,  
 “ where we have samples of the highest de-  
 “ grees of insanity, proofs of their agency  
 “ were most to be expected. At the same  
 “ time, it represents God as the only being  
 “ in the universe who inflicts and removes  
 “ diseases at his pleasure, not excepting those  
 “ which superstition ascribed to evil spirits.”  
 That “ God is the only being in the universe  
 “ who inflicteth and removeth diseases at his  
 “ pleasure,” was believed and maintained long  
 before this gentleman was born, even by those  
 who acknowledged the reality of dæmoniacal  
 possessions ; nor was this truth thought at all  
 inconsistent with a wicked man’s conveying a  
 pestilential disorder to his neighbour, or smit-  
 ing him with a sore and lasting wound. But  
 the present design of our author’s reasoning,  
 if it means any thing, is to shew, that the  
 highest degrees of delusion and insanity must  
 be ascribed to the immediate agency of the  
 blessed God ; and that, what the Holy Scrip-  
 tures call the overthrow of Satan’s king-  
 dom, or the casting out devils, was only  
 the exertion of God’s power in counter-  
 acting the effects of his own immediate  
 agency, at the command of Christ. These

things indeed are very consistent with those ideas which he hath advanced in other parts of his "Essay," as well as in his "Dissertation" "on Miracles," wherein he attributes every kind of events to one and the same causation; but they undoubtedly are, if any thing can be, inconsistent with the principles of Revelation, and all distinctions between virtue and vice. The real design of what happened to the herd on this occasion, we have already shewn<sup>a</sup>; which may not improperly be reviewed after this section.

§ 4. We pass by our author's application of those permissive terms which are used by the sacred writers concerning the dæmons, because, he hath elsewhere, agreeably with his own principles, sufficiently intimated, that he looks upon God's permission or sufferance and his direct command to be the same thing, which exactly coincides with his doctrine concerning Divine Providence; neither do we think it worth while to point out the absurdity of representing our Lord as destroying the swine, that he might punish the owners for violating the laws of Hyrcanus, who had

<sup>a</sup> Chap. v. § 19.

forbidden the keeping of those animals. These articles want no other refutation than a bare recital. It must appear evident from the foregoing examples of interpretation, which is enough for our present purpose, that the language of the sacred penmen concerning dæmoniacal possessions, is so very clear and expressive, that the meaning and force of their words cannot be evaded, without running either into gross absurdities, or else into something which is still worse than absurdities. Nay, we might quote, even the testimony of this writer himself, if it could be of any use, in support of the plain sense of the apostles, “ We have,” says he, “ shewn elsewhere, that to be *in the spirit*, is “ an expression that implies some suspension “ of our own faculties, and our thinking and “ acting under a foreign impulse and impression <sup>1</sup>.” The evangelist Mark says, “ There was—a man in an unclean spirit, “ and he cried out, saying,—What have we to “ do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth ? “ Art thou come to destroy us ? I know “ thee, who thou art, the holy One of God\* !” Now, according to the above rule, this man’s

<sup>1</sup> On Dem. p. 100.      \* Chap. i. 23, 24.

" own faculties were suspended, and he acted  
 " under a foreign impression," when he said to  
 Christ, " I know thee, who thou art, the  
 " holy One of God," or in other words,  
 " he did really speak under the influence of a  
 " spirit." The design of the sacred penman  
 was undoubtedly to convey this very idea,  
 nor can any other terms be found better  
 adapted to such a purpose. It will not be  
 easy, on any other principle, to account for  
 this circumstance, that mad men should not  
 only have a clearer view of our Lord's real  
 character than the most attentive of his  
 followers, but should also understand, that  
 it was a part of his errand into the world, to  
 destroy the power of evil spirits, and adjudge  
 them in due time to their destined punish-  
 ment; even while none of the disciples seem  
 to have been acquainted with these arti-  
 cles, nay, the contrary is almost evident to  
 a common reader, since this part of the work  
 of Christ is not once mentioned by the  
 evangelists, till, with expressions of surprise,  
 they relate those facts themselves that first  
 discovered and proved the doctrine. Now,  
 supposing " that mad men, long before they  
 " were seized with their disorder, might learn  
 " in common with others, the high character  
 " of

“ of the Messiah then universally expected \*,” yet is it probable, that they should be acquainted with those capital parts of his office which do not appear, from any one circumstance in the sacred history, to have been known at that time by his own disciples, far less by the people at large; or that they should at sight distinguish Jesus of Nazareth from all other men, and know him as soon as he appeared in public to be the true Messiah and “ the holy One of God,” while the greatest part of Judea apprehended no such thing, nor were yet apprized of the nature of his pretensions? It is never once intimated, that Christ, at the beginning of his ministry, was considered by the public as “ the Son of God,” who was come to destroy the power of evil spirits, nor can any thing be more improbable in itself. If this had been the case, would the sacred writers have spoken of the knowledge and declarations of dæmoniacs as something uncommon and surprising; would they have informed us so often, that our Lord “ suffered not the dæmons to speak because “ they knew him †,” if they had not intended that kind of knowledge which belonged not to

\* On Dem. p. 245.

† Mark i. 34. Luke iv. 41.

the people in general? Indeed, what sense can be made of their language, if they did not design to express and prove, from certain facts, the reality of dæmoniacal possessions?

§ 5. The following solution of this circumstance concerning the dæmoniacs, which hath been lately given, and which perhaps some serious Christians may look upon as not over friendly to their religion, is too curious in itself to be omitted; we shall give it in the author's own words, and then point out those parts of it which seem to be *unguarded*, if not offensive, "If," says, Mr. Farmer "I might  
 " be allowed to propose a conjecture, I would  
 " observe, that perhaps the demoniacs would  
 " run into the common opinion concerning  
 " Jesus as the promised Messiah, more eagerly than persons of a cooler judgment; the  
 " latter being struck with some contrary appearances in his character (such as the poverty of his condition, and the spiritual nature of his doctrine) which escaped the  
 " attention of the former, who, for this reason, with greater confidence saluted him  
 " under his high character, agreeably to the first impression which his miracles made on  
 " the minds of all men<sup>k</sup>." Our reverence

<sup>k</sup> On Dem. p. 247.



for the character of Christ will not suffer us to acknowledge any of the following articles: that it was likely for "*mad men* to run into the common opinion concerning Jesus as the promised Messiah, more eagerly than persons of a *cooler judgment*;" that "the poverty of his condition, and the spiritual nature of his doctrine were *contrary appearances*," far less, that these were *impediments* to the faith of *considerate men*; and that *inattention* to his low condition and the nature of his doctrine, is to be considered as *one reason* why any person "saluted" Christ as the Messiah "with *greater confidence*;" nor can it be allowed, that "the opinion concerning Jesus as the promised Messiah, was at all *common*" when the mad men at Capernaum addressed him as "the holy One of God," for the casting out this evil spirit is always mentioned among the first of his miracles, and as the very first of that kind. We leave others to determine, whether the solution here given by our author, be either just in itself or honourable to "the Son of God."

§ 6. The evangelist Mark assures us, that the Gadarene dæmoniac addressed Jesus as "the Son of the most high God;" adjured him "that he might not be tormented" for this  
very

very reason, because Christ *had* said, "Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit;" upon being "asked his name, answered, "Legion, for we are many;" and "besought him that he would not send *them* away out of the country." The sacred penman then changes the number, very improperly indeed, if he had not looked upon himself as relating facts just as they *really were*, and says, "*all the dæmons* besought him—and forthwith Jesus gave *them* leave, and the *unclean spirits* went out\*." Would any careful and conscientious writer, speaking only of one dæmoniac, have expressed himself in such a manner as this, if he had not believed the reality of possessions, and been persuaded, that in this case more evil spirits than one were concerned? Would he, after informing us that the dæmon or dæmoniac "besought Jesus not to send *them* away out of the country," have added, that "*all the dæmons*" likewise "intreated him" (a circumstance that entirely depended both on the information and credit of the historian), had he not been persuaded, nay, we might say, had he not certainly known, that, though only one voice spake, yet there were many petitioners? Supposing the dæmoniac to have fancied himself

\* Chap. v. 1—20. Luke viii. 26—39.

possessed,

possessed, and to have considered Jesus as “the Son of the most high God,” would he have been afraid of “torments” upon Christ’s “saying “Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit?” Can any thing be more improbable; nay, is not the contrary obvious? The very request “not to be tormented” was an acknowledgement of Christ’s power to cast out the dæmon, the command therefore to “come out” must have given the man himself pleasure, whether we suppose his possession to have been imaginary or real, accordingly the fear of “torment” never could have been mentioned as a consequence of our Lord’s command, if it had not been, to shew the reality of dæmoniacal influence in this case, and that the dread which was expressed could not be the man’s own. Would the sacred penmen have been so *improperly* descriptive and particular in their narrations, that “the dæmons went out of the men and entered into the swine, and,” that “the whole herd, about two thousand, ran violently down a steep place, and were strangled in the sea,” had they not intended, by the most direct language and expressive facts, to convince future ages, that this man was *really* afflicted by such evil spirits, as were capable of doing much mischief, when departed from him, but who could

could not injure the meanest animal, without the sufferance of God and Christ? Could they have set forth this truth to the world, by any circumstance at once more gentle in itself and at the same time more effectual for the purpose? None of those who have been most zealous, in supporting the notion of dæmoniacal possessions, could ever express the doctrine in a stronger or more decisive manner than the Evangelists have done. If any one disapproves the judgment of the apostles in this matter, would it not be much more honourable, to own it freely than to insist upon it, with such a violence as rarely indicates a consciousness of truth, that the inspired writers never either said or thought those things, which every sober person that can read must know they do both assert and maintain, in the strongest language that mankind are capable of using? We must either admit the agency of evil spirits in this case, or entirely reject the accounts that are given of the Gadarene dæmoniacs, as unworthy of Christ; which would be to overthrow the credit of three Evangelists relating what they heard and saw, and with theirs, that of the whole Gospel, while, at the same time, it would have the appearance of an unreasonable attack upon the faith of all history.

§ 7. Mr. Farmer, in the beginning of his "Essay on Demoniacs," says, "With respect to Christians, I see no reason why they should be alarmed at an attempt to shew, that the New Testament doth not countenance the doctrine of real possessions. Can it overturn any article of their faith, that they themselves could *wish* to be true? May it not free them from many groundless terrors, and give them more honourable ideas of the divine government?" Suppose any one should undertake to prove, that there is no such thing as vice or wickedness, and, after asserting, that "there is no reason why Christians should be alarmed at the attempt," should then ask, "Can it overturn any article of their faith, that they themselves could *wish* to be true?" In what light would such a question be considered; and what answer ought to be returned in such a case? They who contend for the reality of a delusive influence from superior evil beings, have no more pleasure, in contemplating the thing itself, than a good man has, in thinking of some base action the truth of which he cannot deny. If the sacred penmen, in their

history of dæmoniacs and the various influence of wicked spirits, either have recorded things that are false, or, which is much the same, must be understood as meaning directly contrary to what they affirm, *the credit* of all the illustrious facts delivered in the Gospel concerning the “Son of God,” which Christians *wish* to be true, *is overturned*, while the doctrines taught by this writer, neither deliver us from groundless terrors, nor give us any honourable ideas of the divine government. He ascribes the most affecting circumstances of wretchedness to the operation of that Hand from which alone we expect deliverance and protection, and represents Almighty God as the sole Author of those false perceptions of dreadful thoughts and horrid suggestions, which not only rob the soul of the sweetest comforts and most endearing connections of human life, but also, for the time, render it incapable of those higher and nobler pleasures that arise, from the pursuit of knowledge, religion, communion with God and Christ, and the well-grounded expectation of future happiness. Do not the Holy Evangelists, therefore, to say the least of it, write more consistently with our ideas of the perfections of God, and the design of true religion,

ligion, when they attribute such deceitful and ruinous effects to the influence of wicked spirits? And, besides, this doctrine, as stated in the Scriptures, exactly coincides with the great end expressly assigned for “the manifestation  
“ of the Son of God, which is, that he might  
“ destroy the works of the devil.”

## THE CONCLUSION.

*It hath been frequently intimated in the foregoing Chapters, that the general Principles of the Reasoning, as well as the particular Arguments, lately urged against Dæmoniack Possessions, are unfriendly to the Christian Religion; while, at the same Time, they very much affect the nature and foundation of Morality itself. We shall therefore close the Whole, with a summary View of those injurious Consequences which have been so often alluded to in the preceding Work.*

§ 1. **I**F no superior created beings ever had any power over mankind, or influence within the limits of the human system; if no effects of the agency of such beings, either are, or ever were, seen on this earthly globe<sup>a</sup>; it clearly follows, that, the account given in the Holy Scriptures, concerning the fall of man and the entrance of death by the malice and treachery of the devil, is altogether erroneous and delusive. If it be no more in the power of superior created spirits

<sup>a</sup> Farm. on Mir. chap. ii. sect. 1, 2.



to do either good or hurt to mankind, than it is in our power to injure or assist the inhabitants of distant globes, it will be an unavoidable consequence, that all those passages in the Bible which connect the wickedness of men with the influence of any superior evil beings, or which attribute particular events to the ministry of angels, are unworthy of credit, and ought to be rejected by all intelligent lovers of truth; since, on this hypothesis, we might as well ascribe any instance of wickedness or calamity to the suggestions and influence of the limited inhabitants of Saturn or Jupiter, as to the devil and his associates. And, according to these principles, whenever the apostles speak of the "Son of God" as coming "to destroy the works of the devil," and to deliver men from his power and mischievous devices, they do but feed the imaginations of their disciples with vain suggestions and extravagant fancies; because there are no such works, no such power, no such devices, to be destroyed, and we, by following those guides, are betrayed into superstitious opinions, and filled with many groundless apprehensions. If human calamities and death, with those various delusions of mind to which we are subject, are all to be attributed to the original constitution

of nature as their proper and immediate source<sup>b</sup>, the sacred writers were egregiously mistaken, when they ascribed the labour, sorrow, diseases, and death, of mankind, with the curse upon the ground, to sin as their proper and immediate source, and it can no longer be received as a truth, that, *By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed on all men, for that all have sinned*<sup>c</sup>. Such declarations also as the following cease to be worthy of any further credit, *Since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead*<sup>d</sup>, because “death,” in this passage, is no more allowed to be from the original constitution of things than “the resurrection of the dead;” and the whole of what is said in the Gospel, concerning the design of our Lord’s incarnation and the nature of his ministry and work, must be rejected, so that it will become absurd for any one to say, *Christ took on him our nature, that through death, he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil*<sup>e</sup>, since, on this scheme, it was God alone who introduced sin and death.

<sup>b</sup> Farm. on Dem. p. 163—172.

<sup>c</sup> Rom. v. 12.    <sup>d</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 21.    <sup>e</sup> Heb. ii. 14.

§ 2. If the settled order of causes and effects in the moral world, with the operations and influence of the elements, and the various productions of the earth, are all to be ascribed to the very same laws and constitution of nature <sup>f</sup>, there must be an end of all that the Scriptures have delivered, concerning the special providence of God towards his church. The guilt of sin and the moral depravity of mankind, so often asserted and illustrated by the sacred writers, must be given up as groundless and erroneous opinions. All those doctrines which the apostles have taught concerning Christ's "taking away the sin of the world \*," "bearing sin §," and "delivering us from "the wrath to come †," with the necessity of "repentance towards God, and faith in our "Lord Jesus Christ ‡," for the remission of sins and everlasting life, must be censured and denied, as ideas that have arisen from a very imperfect and fallacious view of things. We must also renounce the whole of the account given in the Gospel, concerning our recovery to God, the renewal of our nature, and our meetness for the heavenly world; which things are by the apostles every where ascribed to an immediate divine agency.

<sup>f</sup> Farm. on Mir. p. 90.

\* John i. 29. § Pet. ii. 24. † 1 Theff. i. 10. ‡ Acts. xx. 21.

True holiness, as it includes an unfeigned love of God, a real delight in his perfections, and a conformity of heart to his word, doth not, in the judgment of the sacred penmen, arise from the common endowments of our fallen nature received at our birth, but from the power and energy of the Holy Ghost renewing our souls, which operate on us through Christ, in whom we become the children of God, and are made partakers of that divine image which was lost by the first transgression ; but this doctrine, the support and perfection of the Christian scheme, must, among the fore-mentioned important truths, be entirely disowned, if we attribute the settled order of causes and effects in the moral world, with the regularity and uniformity of the natural world, to the operation of the very same laws. The apostle Paul can no longer be considered as affording divine instructions, and a solid ground of hope, when he uses the following expressive language, *We ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour towards man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of re-*  
*generation*

generation and the renewal of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life<sup>s</sup>. To which may be added, that the innumerable instances of advice and encouragement like that which follows, as well as the principles on which they are grounded, will lose all their force and propriety: *If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye, through the spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God<sup>h</sup>*; since if all moral effects are as much to be attributed to the stated operations of the laws of matter and motion as the fruits of the ground, such ideas as these expressed by the apostle are ridiculous; the uniform language of the Bible with respect to religion becomes grossly absurd; and the difference between virtue and vice, with all sentiments of self-approbation and self-reproach, will be for ever extinguished. Thus, not only the design and contents of Revelation, but also the nature and foundation of morality, must all be given up, before we can admit the general principles on which the late reasoning against

<sup>s</sup> Tit. iii. 3—7.<sup>h</sup> Rom. viii. 13, 14.

dæmoniacal possessions is founded. Have not sober Christians then just cause to be alarmed at any attempt which draws after it such dreadful consequences, and the rather, when it is undertaken as an instance of professed zeal for the Christian faith?

§ 3. It may perhaps be said, in defence of the foregoing hypothesis, that, although the influence of superior created spirits within the limits of the human system, with the vulgar account of the fall and the erroneous notions concerning the design of Christ's appearance in the world, be wholly rejected, as doctrines equally groundless and absurd, it doth not follow, that, all difference between virtue and vice is taken away, or that, we must of consequence deny the existence of evil and wickedness. This is very true; such things therefore are not inferred from a *bare denial* of the influence of superior created beings within the limits of the human system, but, from the *arguments made use of in support* of that denial. Let it be taken for granted, that there is much wickedness in the world, the following question naturally occurs, Whence doth all this sin and transgression arise, which is so obvious that it cannot be denied,

nied, and so extensive as to affect every individual? Is man the sole contriver of it? Doth it all spring from that original bias which human nature had when it came out of the hand of our Maker? We are told from respectable authority, that, “There is an unaccountable disposition in mystical preachers to depreciate and vilify human nature! They exhibit it,” as we are informed, “in the most odious and detestable views, and then they pretend to adore the Author of it.”—Now, which is most dishonourable to human nature: to maintain, with the Scriptures, that mankind have been deceived by superior wicked spirits, through whose influence sin and death were first introduced, and who still continue to betray men on a variety of occasions into vice; or to affirm, that all the wickedness committed in the world has no other source, no other provocation, than the original bias and malignity of the human heart? Who is it that degrades our nature; the “mystical preacher,” who urgeth the consequences of the first sin, and the fall of man, which he says was brought to pass by the treachery of the devil, and therefore warns his hearers against the influence of that wicked being in opposition to the

word of God, or the “ refined and rational  
 “ preacher,” as he is pleased to style himself,  
 who denies, that, mankind was ever affected by  
 the influence of any superior wicked beings,  
 and attributes all our evils and calamities to  
 the original constitution of nature? Which  
 of these is the reviler of mankind; which is  
 it that loads the human species with reproaches  
 and disgrace, while yet, “ he pretends to adore  
 “ the Author of it?”

§ 4. Have we not also been repeatedly assured, that, there is, and *must be*, a fixed order of causes and effects throughout the whole system of nature; that, the generation and cure of human diseases are the result of this constitution; and that, the settled order of causes and effects both in the natural and moral world, are to be attributed to the strict and constant observance of the very same laws? Doth it not then clearly follow, that, men are no otherwise the subjects of praise and blame than plants and trees; and that it would be equally absurd to charge it as a fault upon a bramble that it is not a vine, or on a rush that it is not an oak, as on base and treacherous persons that they are not virtuous and good? Thus wicked men can no more, in  
 strictness



strictness of speech, be the subjects of *deserved* censure than thistles or hemlock, since on this hypothesis, they are equally the result of the same uniform and invariable laws, and all alike both useful in their natures, and conformable to the immediate will and appointment of God; and so there can be no room for self-approbation or self-reproach. It also follows, on this plan, that whatever God suffers is the result of his will and immediate appointment. We are accordingly informed, that, "What some call " God's *permitting*, would be in reality " *empowering* and *commissioning*, evil spirits " to work miracles; that, there cannot " be a stronger reflection upon the wisdom of God than to maintain, that he " constantly denies his creatures the use of " those natural powers which he bestows and " preserves; and hence it is inferred, that " what is called *a restraint upon the liberty* " of superior beings is more properly *a natural inability* of working miracles<sup>1</sup>." By " miracles," in this passage, are understood any effects produced by superior created beings within the limits of the human system; for the author supposes, that, every instance of this kind would be contrary to the established

<sup>1</sup> Farm. on Mir. p. 84—112.

laws of nature. Whether then we consider the agency of the devil in bringing about the fall of man as miraculous or not, yet, on this principle, we must allow that God's *permitting* him would be in reality *empowering* and *commissioning* him to introduce sin; because it would be a reflection upon the wisdom of God to restrain him from the use of those natural powers which himself had communicated. Hence it follows, as an unavoidable consequence, that, if God, in order to qualify his creatures for an extensive sphere of beneficent action, communicates such powers as may enable them also to commit great evil, they have therefore an equal right to accomplish both, if they can; since the Divine Permission amounts to a direct appointment and command. For the same reason, if wicked men succeed in their attempts, that success will be a proof, that, what they have done is in itself lawful and agreeable to the mind and will of God. Such doctrine is well calculated to inspire depraved and ambitious persons with the most abandoned and ruinous designs! And, on this hypothesis, all actions and events whatever are attributed, either to the *direct agency*, or to the *immediate appointment*, of the Deity. If Judas was under any influence more than human, when he betrayed his Master,

it must be ascribed to God and not to any evil being, for properly speaking, it seems, there are none such, at least within the limits of the human system: In this article likewise the above quoted author has been consistent with himself; for he defines all miracles to be *divine transgressions* (if such a phrase can be allowed) of those general laws of nature which God ordained to be invariable <sup>k</sup>, and considers them as the only effects in the world contrary to that course and order of events which the Deity himself established <sup>l</sup>. Those things which the Holy Scriptures call the overthrow of Satan's kingdom, he represents as nothing more than particular exertions of God's power in counteracting the effects of his own agency, at the command of Christ, and those highest degrees of insanity and delusion which the sacred writers have attributed to the devil, he scruples not to ascribe to the immediate agency of the blessed God <sup>m</sup>! Thus all difference of characters is taken away, and the only rules by which virtue can be distinguished from vice are utterly destroyed. For, if those works which have been considered as proper to the

<sup>k</sup> On Mir. chap. i. sect. 1.

<sup>l</sup> On Dem. p. 183.      <sup>m</sup> Ibid. p. 292—303.

worst of beings may be justly ascribed to the best, there is no authentic standard in nature by which human reason can judge concerning the morality of actions. We can never tell, that, those instances of conduct which men have hitherto thought the most vicious and base are not in themselves strictly just, and the many excellent discourses that have been written, concerning the eternal and immutable nature of moral obligation, must be considered as little better than delusive dreams.

§ 5. From the above principles, we may trace the real source of that *ambiguous* reasoning which hath been offered of late, in defence of a Divine Revelation. The observations and arguments which Mr. Farmer hath advanced, with respect to the design and use of miracles, appear to me directly pointed against the authority of the Holy Scriptures, while at the same time they are urged in support of a Revelation from God. This naturally puts me in mind of Lord Bolingbroke's conduct, who freely asserts, that, "the Christian system of faith and practice was revealed by God himself; that its simplicity and plainness shewed, that it  
 9 " was

“ was designed to be the religion of man-  
 “ kind, and manifested likewise the divinity  
 “ of its original ; and that Christ, the pub-  
 “ lisher of Christianity, proved his assertions  
 “ by his miracles<sup>a</sup>,” with many other strik-  
 ing concessions in favour of the Christian  
 scheme, while yet his lordship endeavours to  
 invalidate the authority of the Holy Scrip-  
 tures, and censures the writings of the apostle  
 Paul, and many of the prophets, with great  
 severity ! Mr. Farmer, after assuring us that,  
 “ Miracles equally prove the *divinity* and  
 “ *truth* of a prophet’s doctrine as his mission,”  
 directly adds, “ Agreeably hereto we find,  
 “ that, the prophets of God, both under the  
 “ Old Testament and the New, at the same  
 “ time that they asserted their divine mission,  
 “ explained the particular object of it, or  
 “ the purpose for which they were sent ; and  
 “ that they urged their miracles as immediate  
 “ divine testimonies to their message or doc-  
 “ trine, as well as to their mission<sup>b</sup>.” This is  
 a misrepresentation of facts which bears very  
 hard on the authority of some of the inspired  
 writers ; for the greatest part of the old pro-  
 phets who spake in the name of the Lord,

<sup>a</sup> Leland’s View, &c. vol. ii. p. 507—512.

<sup>b</sup> On Mir. p. 515.

wrought,

wrought no miracles ; neither Jeremiah, nor Hosea, nor Amos, nor Joel, nor Micah, and others ; nor any of the latter prophets “ ever “ urged such works, as immediate divine testimonies to their message or doctrine,” yet those persons were not excused who refused to obey the word which they spake in the name of God.

§ 6. But this gentleman proceeds \*, “ By “ some learned writers it has been asserted, “ that, *we may be rationally assured, that a prophet is sent of God ; BEFORE we have heard “ one word of his doctrine ;* and supposed, that “ all the miracles of a prophet may be performed first, and his doctrine be delivered “ afterwards.” With this opinion our author is very much displeased ; not that he thinks it of any moment for us to enquire into the nature of the doctrines delivered, as we shall presently see, but it is the circumstance of *order* which gives him so much offence. He will not allow any thing to be received as a doctrine or message from God, which did not precede the working of miracles. “ Moses,” it seems, first delivered

\* On Mir. p. 516—519.

his message, and then proved his mission by divine works; and by the evidence of miracles wrought afterwards in the wilderness, he shewed his authority as a divine lawgiver. It is dangerous, as we are informed, to receive any thing from a prophet or an apostle, as the will of God, which was not immediately attended with miracles; we must not depend on all they say, as long as they live, for this would be a supposition “ of a like nature “ with that on which the unhappy man seems “ to have proceeded, who was slain by a “ lion for giving too hasty credit to a pro- “ phet.” This story, by the way, is here strangely perverted; for it is no where said in the sacred history, that the man was slain for giving *too hasty credit* to a prophet, but for “ *disobeying the mouth* of the Lord, and “ *for not keeping the commandment* which the “ Lord his God commanded HIM \*.” Our author’s reasoning, on this occasion, cannot be admitted, without rejecting the divine authority of the greatest part of the Holy Scriptures; and indeed he expressly intimates, that many things have been delivered and received as the word of God, which ought

\* 1 Kings, xiii. 21.

not to be considered in that light. "What," says he, "has furnished infidelity with more objections, and occasioned so much perplexity to sincere Christians, as men's maintaining that a prophet who has once performed miracles, is thereby rendered for ever incapable of error and vice; and their building articles of faith on his private opinions, with respect to subjects not included in his commission, and with regard to which he might think and speak like other men?" We are fully persuaded, that it is not in this gentleman's power to name any one writer of the least credit who maintains, that a prophet, having once performed miracles, is thereby rendered *for ever incapable* of error and vice; nor do those sincere Christians act upon *this supposition*, who yet receive many parts, nay, whole books, both of the Old and New Testament, as the word of God, though they were not *immediately* followed, nor *ever enforced*, that we know of, by miracles, as divine testimonies to their authority. Mr. Farmer may, if he pleases, consider this as "building articles of faith upon the private opinions of the prophets and apostles, with respect to subjects not included in their commission," we are of a different



different mind, for many satisfactory reasons that might soon be given, were it needful, and did it relate to our present subject. The consequences of his doctrine are obvious. If he has any arguments to offer in support of his judgment, concerning this matter, they ought to be, and undoubtedly will be, reviewed with candour; but, when he gives an unfair and injurious representation of the ground of other men's belief, a direct denial of his assertions is all the answer that he can reasonably expect.

§ 7. " All the prophets of God," it seems, " did not perform their miracles with one " " view, nor were their commissions of the " " same extent." Yet, as we are informed, " Each clearly stated the distinct and special " " purposes of his own mission and miracles; " " and *always* declared what those purposes " " were, *before* he performed his miracles, or " " (which is the same thing) before he ceased " " to perform miracles.—On this plan, no in- " " convenience could possibly insue from the " " errors of a prophet, on subjects foreign " " from his commission; nor even from his " " acting afterwards contrary to his own con- " " victions, with respect to the subject of his  
E c " commission;

“ commission ; or on any other occasion <sup>9</sup>.” We have seen, that nothing is to be received from a prophet, as inspired of God, unless his message or doctrine was supported by the immediate testimony of miracles, and we are now told, that, “ each prophet—*always* “ declared what were the special purposes of “ his mission, *before* he ceased to perform “ miracles.” Thus the Holy Scriptures are reduced to a very small number of books indeed ! The greatest part of the old prophets wrought no miracles ; neither did John the Baptist, and yet no one could be more punctual in stating the nature and design of his mission than he was. Now all these, on the plan here laid down, must be excluded from the number of *genuine* prophets, and the things which they taught are no longer to be considered as divine. Nay, even the judgment of Christ himself will be affected, if we may credit his historian, who represents him as affirming, that, “ among those which are “ born of women, there hath not arisen a “ greater prophet than John the Baptist \*.” We know nothing concerning “ the errors”

<sup>9</sup> *Farm. on Mir.* p. 519, 520.

\* *Matth.* ix. 11.

and misconduct of the prophets, but from their own account, and themselves always speak of them *as errors*, with every mark of disapprobation. They have no where left it for us to determine, what subjects were or were not “foreign from their commission;” for, in every part of their writings, they have stated with the greatest care what things are to be considered as coming from God, and what actions, whether of their own or of other men, are approved or disapproved by the righteous Judge of the world. Nor can this gentleman point out any one instance wherein the private opinions of the inspired writers concerning things not included in their commissions, are ever delivered as divine truths, or proposed to the faith of mankind. All insinuations of this nature are equally uncandid and injurious, and may be the means of doing much hurt, when put into the hands of youth, under the strongest recommendations. We beg leave therefore to affirm, that this author hath supposed facts which never existed, and that of consequence there can be neither any foundation nor reason for the plan here laid down, in order to avoid the inconveniences supposed to have arisen from the errors and misconduct of the prophets. The

whole of what he here advances is grounded on a misrepresentation of the Holy Scriptures, and would lead us to conclude, that many parts of those writings which have hitherto been considered by Protestants as of divine authority, were not really inspired of God, and therefore not to be received under the sanction of his name.

§ 8. But our author thus goes on towards the close of the same paragraph, “ Miracles  
“ are the testimony of God himself, to a per-  
“ son professing to deliver a message from  
“ him; a proof of the divine original of his  
“ mission and doctrine. But we are to receive  
“ as divine upon this evidence, no other  
“ doctrines than those it was designed to con-  
“ firm.” Now, on this principle we ask, have the apostles any were pointed out the different parts of their writings, as what they meant to be confirmed by certain miracles which should follow their publication or delivery to the churches? What were the *immediate* testimonies from God to those truly divine epistles, one of which was written to the Romans, whom the sacred penman had

† On Mir. p. 521.

never seen, two to the Corinthians, among whom his authority had been disputed, and by whom “a proof of Christ’s speaking in him”<sup>\*</sup> had been demanded, and one to the Hebrews, which bears not even the name of the writer? Must we, as a compliment to this gentleman’s arbitrary rules, give up the divine authority of the largest and most interesting part of the Holy Scriptures? To prevent all mistakes on so important a subject, he should at least have informed his readers in plain language, what parts both of the Old and New Testament he would have them reject, and the rather, since he considers the nature of the doctrines which the sacred books contain as not at all entering into the reason on account of which they ought to be received.

§ 9. “No man,” says he, “was ever so absurd as to maintain, that attestations properly divine can deceive us, or that God would immediately interpose in support of false claims. And this proof of a divine commission from the credentials we are now speaking of, is full and sufficient, without taking into consideration the doctrine

<sup>\*</sup> 2 Corinth. xiii. 3.

“ they attest. The proof arises out of the  
 “ nature of the miracles, independent of  
 “ every thing else. This fully vindicates the  
 “ conduct of the prophets of God, who, as  
 “ was shewn above, demanded the immediate  
 “ assent and regard of mankind to their di-  
 “ vine commission, upon the sole evidence  
 “ of their miracles, and prior to all reason-  
 “ ings concerning the natural propriety and  
 “ fitness of their doctrine \*.” Here we be-  
 leave to affirm, in our turn, that, *as was shewn*  
*above*, many of the prophets of God never  
 asked the attention of mankind in considera-  
 tion of their miracles, because they wrought  
 none, and therefore could not demand their  
*immediate* assent and regard upon this *sole evi-*  
*dence* “ prior to all reasonings concerning  
 “ the natural propriety and fitness of their  
 “ doctrine;” such too was the case with John  
 the Baptist. Christ himself argued with men  
 from their own apprehensions of what is  
 right, and commanded his hearers to “ search  
 “ the Scriptures \*.” The apostle Paul at  
 “ Thessalonica ”—“ *reasoned* with the Jews out  
 “ of the Scriptures, opening and alledging, that

\* On Mir. p. 522, 523.

\* John v. 39.

“ Christ must needs have suffered and risen,”—and that “ Jesus whom he preached—was the “ Christ ;” with “ the Athenians,” also, he reasoned from the works and perfections of God, and the concessions of their own writers, while he preached repentance and a future judgment, grounded on the resurrection of Christ ; and yet, on neither of these occasions did he work any miracles \*. We have many instances, both in the Old and New Testament, in which the prophets of God were believed, and their messages embraced with the sincerest affection, although no miracles were performed. Both the prophets and apostles reason with men, appeal to acknowledged principles and truths, exhort by all arguments, and urge them to search, enquire, compare, examine, and “ prove all things,” that they may “ hold fast that which is “ good †.” Notwithstanding the mistaken conceptions of our author, and the direct aspersions thrown on the sacred writers by Mr. Dodwell ‡, as if neither Christ nor his apostles would allow men to enquire into the propriety of the things which they deli-

\* Acts xvii. 1—5. 16—end.

† 1 Thes. v. 21.

‡ Christianity not founded on Argument, &c.

vered, previous to their profession of faith, the prophets of God no where demanded the *immediate* assent and regard of mankind to their divine commission, *without taking into consideration the natural propriety and fitness* of their doctrines and commandments. We cannot tell what should induce a Christian and *Protestant* minister to advance tenets so contrary to the facts recorded every where in the word of God, so injurious to the characters of the sacred penmen, and so detrimental to the authority of the Holy Scriptures. It hath the appearance of slander to affirm, that the inspired writers, in any case, demand our assent or enjoin faith upon us, “ prior to all “ reasoning concerning the propriety of their “ doctrine.” Such things can never be justly said of those who laboured by all means “ to commend themselves to *every man’s con- science*, in the sight of God \*.” This gentleman should not, above all men, take upon him to represent the prophets of God as demanding the assent of mankind to their messages, without any regard to their natural propriety, unless he really means, like Mr. Dodwell, to reject all the sacred writings, since

\* 2 Corinth. iv. 2,



he himself refuses to admit the most express assertions of the apostles, merely because in his opinion they are *contrary to reason*, and affirms with great warmth, that, “ As the  
 “ first publishers of the Gospel *were not*, so they  
 “ *could not*, be commissioned by God to instruct  
 “ mankind in the physical causes of those  
 “ diseases which they healed. At least, the  
 “ question concerning the reality of posses-  
 “ sions could not be directly and immediately  
 “ determined by the authority of Christ and  
 “ his apostles, without great impropriety<sup>1</sup>;”  
 although he looks upon it to be *very proper*  
*for himself* to decide the matter, and to pro-  
 nounce those to be under the influence of an  
 uncurable prejudice, who shall differ from  
 him<sup>2</sup>! It is left with the candid reader to  
 make what reflections he pleases upon our  
 author’s conduct.

§ 10. Thus much, however we may ven-  
 ture to affirm, that the whole of his reasoning  
 concerning the nature and use of miracles evi-  
 dently terminates in scepticism, and leaves it  
 very doubtful, whether any person can be

<sup>1</sup> On Dem. p. 363, 364:

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 373, and Note.

justly

justly vindicated in believing the truth of the Holy Scriptures. He will not allow any thing to be received as a revelation from God which had not the *immediate* attestation of miracles, and insists upon it, that the prophets, *on this sole evidence*, demand the assent and regard of mankind to their commission, without taking into consideration *the natural propriety* of their message. Hence he rejects rational enquiries as altogether useless in religion, and censures the works of learned men as leading to great uncertainty. He proposes “miracles,” both as the only authentic proof of a divine revelation, and as that which above all others “lies level to the capacities of all mankind, “even of those who have little leisure or “ability for deep researches after truth;— “so that it is not necessary that men should “be made *philosophers* before they become “*Christians*” ;” and yet he maintains, that, “Even a real miracle cannot be admitted as “such, or carry any conviction to those who “are not assured that the event is contradic- “tory to the course of nature,” and that, “Miracles therefore are not, what some re- “present them, appeals to our ignorance ;

† On Mir. p. 533, 534.

“ they

“ they suppose some antecedent knowledge of  
 “ nature; *without* which, it is owned, no pro-  
 “ per judgment can be formed concerning  
 “ them—<sup>w</sup>.” Miracles therefore are a proof  
 of divine revelation which *does not lie level*  
 to the capacities of all mankind, and it is ab-  
 solutely necessary that men *should be made phi-*  
*losophers* before they can become *Christians* !  
 Thus, on his principles, the greatest part of  
 those who have believed Christianity never  
 could have any solid ground for their faith,  
 and most of those who sealed it with their  
 blood never could be possessed of evidence  
 sufficient to vindicate their conduct as just in  
 itself and acceptable to God, while at the same  
 time many objections are raised from what  
 he advances against the future reception of the  
 Gospel. And besides, even now, the bulk  
 of mankind have no more either leisure or  
 abilities for those deep researches which are ne-  
 cessary to ascertain what is or is not contrary  
 to those laws by which the material world is  
 governed, than they have for investigating  
 those abstract reasonings that are above the  
 capacity of the vulgar. Nay, it is not in the  
 power even of this gentleman himself, to

<sup>w</sup> Ibid. p. 20.

prove any one miracle recorded in the Scriptures, according to his own definition, *a real transgression of the laws of matter and motion.*

§ 11. We shall take notice of only one thing more in this author. Speaking of the necessity of miracles, and having stated in his own manner, the subject of the apostles' preaching, he adds, "But who ought or could give credit  
 " to their doctrine and testimony, if it had not  
 " been confirmed by God himself, on whose  
 " good pleasure alone the constitution of the  
 " Gospel was founded? It was impossible by  
 " reason, to prove the antecedent propriety and  
 " necessity of such a constitution. If any  
 " thing can render the necessity of miracles  
 " to confirm and propagate the Gospel still  
 " more apparent, it is the consideration of  
 " the great corruption of the world at the  
 " time of Christ's appearance in it, creat-  
 " ing in men a disaffection to the purity  
 " of this new revelation—<sup>x</sup>." The argument of this passage necessarily implies the following suppositions: first, that the doctrines peculiar to the Gospel are not accommodated to

<sup>x</sup> Ibid. p. 542, 543.

the reason and conscience of mankind, so that there is no medium by which their propriety and truth could be perceived, no one therefore either *ought* or *could* give credit to the apostles' testimony without miracles; next, that *the want* of such a redemption as that preached by the apostles through Christ could *never be shewn* on the principles of reason; and therefore, lastly, that, although "the great corruption of the world at the time of Christ's appearance in it," rendered miracles necessary to confirm and propagate the Gospel, yet *the corruption itself* is not to be considered as an evidence of "the antecedent propriety and necessity of such a constitution," for "it was impossible *to prove that* by reason." Hence it clearly follows, that mankind at the time of Christ's appearance in the world were, for any thing *reason* can shew to the contrary, as good and holy as ever they were designed to be at their creation.

§ 12. However, with all deference to this learned writer, we give it as our humble opinion, that, as it hath a very doubtful appearance in any one, so it will never be of any real service to the Christian religion, to reject all those moral evidences of the truth of the Gospel which arise, from the natural light  
of

of our own minds, from the acknowledged dictates of reason, and that inward sense of right and wrong which is inseparable from the human species as intelligent beings, and then to alledge as *the only* authentic proof of a revelation from God, works of such a kind as are unintelligible to the far greatest part of the world, if not to the whole; for we do not know, that there is any medium by which the reality of *certain effects* in the material world contrary to the laws of matter and motion can be proved. And we venture also to add, that true Christianity will never receive any advantage from affirming, that not even the corruption and wickedness itself which the constitution of the Gospel is designed to remove, can ever shew to our reason the antecedent propriety and necessity of *such a constitution*; because this would be just the same as maintaining, that no one can ever prove, by reason, that the love of God and perfect holiness is more desirable and becoming than wickedness and opposition to the divine will, or that purity of heart is necessary to true happiness. Such tenets as these may afford new strength to evil passions, and be the means of confirming the prejudices of unbelievers, but they will never convert the abandoned, nor eradicate vice from the souls of ungodly men.

We could therefore sincerely wish, that the close of our author's *Dissertation on Miracles* did not so exactly agree with the principles laid down in the beginning of it. For if the order of causes and effects in the moral world are to be ascribed, as he will have it, to those very laws which produce regularity in the natural world, in order to shew that there is but *one common design* carried on, and that all things are under the direction of *one ruling counsel*, it will undoubtedly follow, that no one could ever prove by reason the antecedent propriety and necessity of such a constitution as that of the Gospel; nor, on these principles, will it be possible for us to shew, that the entrance of sin, and the continuance of wickedness, are more contrary to the counsel and will of God than the growth of trees and corn. "The great corruption of the "world" therefore "at the time of Christ's appearance in it," could not even be proved to be *wrong*, nor we be bound to allow any such supposed corruption of mankind as that asserted by the apostles, without miracles; because, according to this plan, the Gospel respects an alteration in God for the better, since the original constitution of things, and not an alteration in man for the worse. Notwithstanding all our boasted improvements in  
theology,

theology, and that happy exemption from the enthusiastic opinions, as they are called, of our forefathers, which is said to be the glory of the present times, upon mature deliberation, it may perhaps be found, that the doctrines of the first reformers, now treated with the utmost contempt, are more agreeable to the principles of reason, and to the express dictates of the Holy Scriptures, and more friendly to the interests of mankind in general, than the modern and *improved* systems of Christianity, which are proposed to us as our best defence against *superstitious* errors, and as the most effectual means of promoting the cause of *virtue* and benevolence among our fellow creatures.

T H E   E N D.



... the Hutchinsons ...  
Mary's second March 1841 ...  
... an ... interpreter ...  
... MONIA in the ...  
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